

THE TIMES

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SATURDAY JANUARY 25 1997

TODAY

EAT OUT FOR
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END OF THE AFFAIR
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Alan Jackson meets Liv Tyler **MAGAZINE**

QUIDS IN
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THE TIMES FOR ONLY 10p EVERY MONDAY

Howard denies QC's collusion claim

Prison staff accused of aiding escape

By Stephen Farrell and Richard Ford

OFFICERS at the maximum security Whitemoor Prison cut perimeter fences to help five IRA inmates and an armed robber in an escape that led to a complete review of prison security, a leading barrister claimed yesterday.

Michael Mansfield, QC, accused prison guards of colluding with the IRA and demanded a new public inquiry into the breakout from the Cambridgeshire prison's special secure unit.

He was speaking after the trial of the six escapees was abandoned because of a potentially prejudicial newspaper report — a decision that prompted the Home Secretary to announce moves to give prosecutors the right to appeal when judges halt proceedings.

Michael Howard also demanded that Mr Mansfield produce evidence to back up his allegations, which were dismissed by the Prison Officers' Association as "completely ridiculous".

Mr Mansfield, who had been defending the terrorist Liam McCotter in the trial at Woolwich Crown Court, said that corrupt or disaffected officers had cut wires on an alarmed outer fence before the prisoners reached it. He also said that four minutes of security camera film of the area was never supplied to the trial or to Sir John Woodcock's inquiry into the escape.

"Prison officers cut through that fence at some earlier stage and there has been a major cover-up," Mr Mansfield said.

Obviously it concerns more than one person, but how far and how high it goes it is impossible to delineate."

Mr Mansfield said that at least one officer in Whitemoor's emergency control room gave evidence that he began filming as soon as the



Mansfield: "There has been major cover-up"

outer fence alarm sounded at 8.09pm on September 9, 1994, but no film was available to the inquiry before 8.13pm.

The prisoners would not have had time to make the 144 cuts to two fences in the first minutes of the escape, he said. "Where is the film? Our clients are not at all happy that the trial has come to an early end because they were able to do during the inquiry."

That had failed to interview all the officers involved, and had been used as an excuse to tighten security at all jails, he added. "Was this something where the security services set up an escape?"

But Mr Howard insisted that the escape had been thoroughly investigated and said: "If Mr Mansfield has any additional information he should certainly make it available to the police at once."

The men on trial at Woolwich were Paul Magee, 48, serving life for murder; Gilbert Macnamara, 36, serving 25 years for the Hyde Park bombing; Peter Sherry, 31, and Liam O'Duibhir, 34, both in jail for life for conspiracy to cause explosions; Liam Mc-

Cotter, 33, serving 17 years for terrorist offences, and Andrew Russell, who had convictions for armed robbery and hijacking. All were charged with breaking out of prison and possessing a firearm with intent to endanger life and with intent to break prison. None will face another trial.

Yesterday Mr Justice Kay heard the London Evening Standard and its publishers Associated Newspapers issue an unqualified, unconditional apology on behalf of the Editor Max Hastings and journalist Mark Honigbaum for the article referring to Magee's IRA links and O'Duibhir and Sherry's terrorist convictions that led the trial to be halted. A report will now go to the Attorney-General who will decide whether to prosecute Mr Hastings for contempt. After the hearing, Mr Hastings said: "We are desperately sorry that a piece of carelessness in our office caused the abandonment of these proceedings."

The Home Secretary said later that he might now seek to give the prosecution in abandoned cases the same right of appeal enjoyed by the defence. "The decision in this case raises serious questions," he said. "I am giving serious consideration to the possibility of legislation to provide such a review."

The Crown Prosecution Service has not requested any such powers and it is unclear whether the measure could pass through Parliament before the general election. But the Lord Chancellor's Department backed the idea, saying: "The Lord Chancellor is very supportive."

Inquiry findings, page 2



Jonah Lomu, accompanied by his wife Tania, announces his enforced break from the game in Auckland yesterday

Illness halts Lomu's career

By John Goodbody
SPORTS NEWS
CORRESPONDENT

THE career of Jonah Lomu, the world's most feared and famous rugby union player, may have been ended by a kidney disease from which specialists give the All Black only a 50-50 chance of complete recovery.

Lomu, who scored four tries against England in the 1995 World Cup semi-final, has stopped playing for six months to undergo "heavy duty" drug treatment. Lomu, the 6ft 5in, 18st wing, said in Auckland yesterday:

"This is a chance I have to take and it is better than doing nothing about it. I would rather miss out six months than miss out on a whole lifetime of living."

"I feel very positive about the treatment. I have got the best doctors on the case and I never lie down and let anything trample over me. This is just a hiccup."

Tongan-born Lomu, nicknamed "The Big Unit", is suffering from nephrotic syndrome, John Mayhew, the All Blacks' doctor, said. "The characteristics of this disease are that he is suffering from low body protein in his blood."

"He is more susceptible to infection and he gets into trouble with swelling, especially after long flights. For the past 18 months, he has been dragging a cart around metaphorically. How he has managed to train and play, I am not sure." Dr Mayhew said that Lomu first began suffering from the syndrome in 1995, and his condition had "deteriorated markedly" in the past 18 months.

Lomu could not have played over the next six months anyway, because he is probably being prescribed corticosteroids and possibly diuretics. Both are banned by the

International Rugby Board. Lomu's last international game was for the New Zealand Barbarians against England at Twickenham on November 30.

The end? Page 60

Prince opposed to public cash for yacht

By Valerie Elliott
WHITEHALL EDITOR

THE Prince of Wales has complained to friends that he was not consulted about the decision to replace the Royal Yacht Britannia or the timing of the announcement.

It is understood he would have preferred to have seen a new yacht funded privately and to have spared the taxpayer the £60 million bill.

Ministers have claimed privately that the Queen herself objected to the idea of a privately funded yacht, even though at one stage it was a favoured option of senior ministers and the Treasury.

An informed source told The Times that the Queen had voiced misgivings about "the prospect of corporate logos" on the new yacht which would have undermined the dignity of the monarchy. The Prime Minister was also said to be of the view that the yacht should be paid for by the taxpayer.

Even though the Prince accepts the matter was essentially for the Government, he was concerned that the decision might backfire on the Royal Family.

A Buckingham Palace spokesman insisted last night that the Queen had never expressed a view about the funding of a new yacht. "The Queen has always regarded this as a matter for the Government."

Campaigners for a publicly-funded ship believed the Queen disapproved of private funding. At a press conference at Westminster last week Lord Ashbourne, chairman of the all-party Royal Yacht group, suggested that the Queen did not favour a commercial solution.

Baby milk powder in salmonella scare

By Susan Bell in Paris and Dominic Kennedy

PARENTS swamped a food-poisoning hotline yesterday after a popular brand of baby milk powder was linked to an outbreak of salmonella. The product, used by 25,000 British babies, was withdrawn from shop shelves as parents were warned to throw away all supplies immediately.

Ten out of the 12 babies throughout Britain who were struck with a rare strain of salmonella during the past week had been fed on an infant milk powder under the Milupa brand. All have recovered.

The product, known as Milumil for Hungrier Bottle-Fed Babies, has been traced to a factory in France. It has stopped making the suspect formula but is continuing to produce other lines. These include Forward, which is aimed at babies from six months to a year and is still being sold in Britain.

The factory's director general, Raymond Sipp, told The Times: "I think there is a certain psychosis in Britain at the moment because of the recent food poisoning problems there. Luckily, this does not appear to have been a serious outbreak. Only two of the babies were hospitalised."

"It is clear that the factory is not contaminated. Those infected were aged between three and 12 months and

Continued on page 2, col 7

Ballroom judges take steps to stamp out dirty dancing

By Ruth Gledhill

AGGRESSION on the ballroom dance floor has reached such levels that professional coaches and judges have drawn up an official "code of conduct" to stamp it out.

Complaints range from "dangerous dancing" to harassment of judges and waiting the wrong way round the floor.

The code is a sure sign that traditional "floorcraft", in which gentlemen take care to ensure their partner is not put at risk by high-speed collisions, is rapidly becoming a thing of the past as the prospect of Olympic recognition draws closer. Injuries on the dance floor have reached record levels, with one top amateur only just about to return to the competition circuit after a dancer damaged her cartilage with a high kick during the rumba.

"Bad floorcraft, aggressive or dangerous dancing will be penalised by the chairman of adjudicators," warns the code, published in Dance News. It comes as more than 700

couples from around the world descend on Bourne-mouth for the Open UK Championships.

As the waltz, tango and quickstep become faster with



Ballroom manoeuvres: dirty work is afoot

increasing numbers of pivots, spins and, in the case of the quickstep, leaps through the air, the problem is that many dancers find they are unable to stop when a rival lands in their path. According to top professionals Stephen Hillier and David Sycamore, both former champions who drew up the code, floorcraft is essential if injury is to be avoided. Couples who breach it could find themselves handed the dance equivalent of a yellow card.

According to Harry Smith-Hampshire, a leading judge and world expert on the Viennese waltz, the problem is at its worst at the top echelons of waltz, quickstep, foxtrot and tango dancing. Writing in Dance News, he says dangerous dancing is carried out with "cold-blooded deliberation".

The code will be translated into at least five foreign languages for many British competitors believe the drop in standards falls at the feet of foreign dancers.

Leading article, page 27

Sainsbury's muddle up Christmas

By Sarah Cunningham

A MISCALCULATION over when people wanted to buy their Christmas groceries has proved costly for Sainsbury's supermarkets. Their share value fell by 13 per cent yesterday after the group issued a warning that this year's profits would be well below expectations.

David Sainsbury, the chairman, said: "We got wrong the weeks in which Christmas trade would come. We had two very quiet weeks and then everyone came at once." That meant huge labour costs as tills and staff stood idle in the first two weeks when customers decided not to shop early.

Mr Sainsbury said that the error would cut about £5 million from the year's profits, which are now expected to be about £640 to £650 million. That compares with £712 million last year when the company recorded its first decline in 22 years. The result of the announcement was that shares fell 51p to 341p.

Profit warning, page 31

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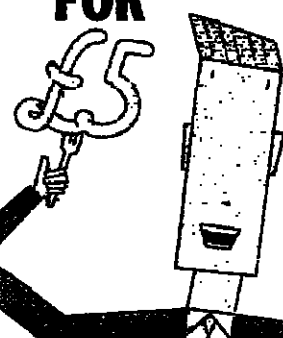
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THE TIMES ON MONDAY

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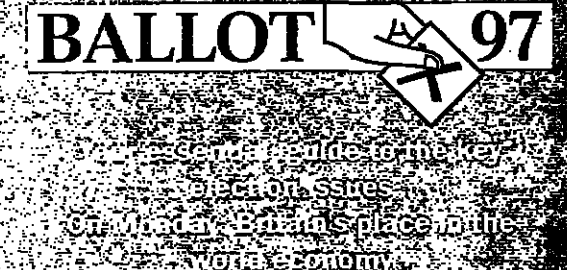
CHURCHILL



CHELSEA v LIVERPOOL
Rob Hughes on the FA Cup match of the weekend



EUROPEAN CUP FINAL
Will Leicester be crowned club champions?



Test match reports from Alan Lee in Auckland

Report on prison escape blamed lax security

By RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

THE devastating official report into the escape of five IRA terrorists from White-moor jail highlighted lax security and the pampering of prisoners, who appeared to have staff at their beck and call.

Sir John Woodcock's inquiry described the escape in September 1994 as a "disaster waiting to happen" but made no suggestion that staff had colluded.

His report said that the five IRA men and an armed robber "cut a hole in the exercise yard fence, which was not alarmed, bent back the out area allowing entry into the sterile area and access to the special secure unit security wall". The

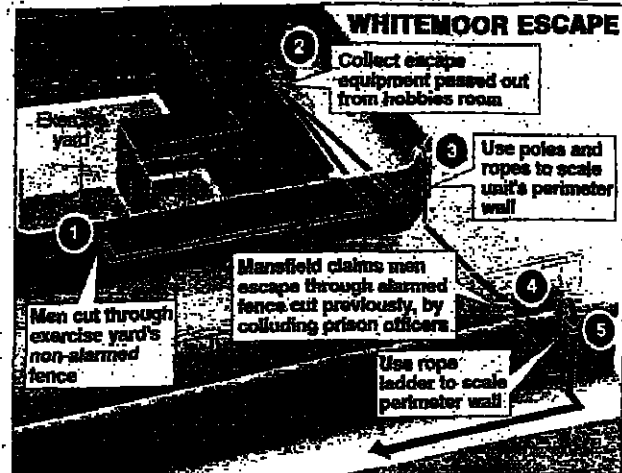
men then moved towards the outer perimeter of the jail. The report adds: "Whilst the tail-enders were still negotiating the first wall, the other escapees cut a section out of the next fence (the second wire fence, which was alarmed) and forcefully bent back the resultant flap to gain access to the sterile area, which is inside the outer wall."

Sir John's assertion that the escapees cut both wire fences was unchallenged until Michael Mansfield, QC, who was acting for one of the IRA men, made his claim yesterday. At the time of the escape many found it impossible to believe that the prisoners could have escaped from the unit, specially designed to hold high-risk inmates, without help. But Sir John's

report disclosed an appalling state of affairs. Searching was not carried out properly. Rub-down examinations had been suspended when a female visitor complained.

Much of the equipment used in the escape came from woodworking activities and other materials had been provided by "well-intentioned staff members". The boltcutters used on both wire fences could have been smuggled to the men in bits.

The first wire fence was not alarmed and one prison official suggested last night that it could have been cut over a number of days without officers spotting the breach. One source suggested that the camera guarding the second fence had been turned the wrong way.



EMU will hit 1999 target, says Brussels

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

BRUSSELS yesterday contradicted John Major's prediction that the European Union would be unlikely to proceed safely with a single currency in 1999.

Yves Thibault de Silguy, the European Commissioner responsible for the single currency, declared that there was "no doubt" that Europe would have its own currency by January 1, 1999, because of the "rock-solid will" of heads of government.

Promising that there would be no "cooking of the books" to enable countries to meet the convergence criteria, M de Silguy nevertheless voiced optimism that a significant number of countries would be in the currency from the start. In an interview to be broadcast on GMTV's *The Sunday Programme*, he said that the single currency was essential for the smooth functioning of the single market.

M de Silguy was supported by Britain's senior European Commissioner, the former Tory Cabinet minister Sir Leon Brittan. He derided Tory backbench fears over joining the single currency as ridiculous, saying that while he supported the Government's wait-and-see policy he nevertheless believed that there were powerful reasons for going ahead with a single currency.

Meanwhile the Prime Min-

ister yesterday dismissed as "completely off-beam" reports that up to 40 pro-European Tory MPs are plotting to split from the party if he loses the election and Michael Portillo succeeds him. He told reporters during a visit to his Huntingdon constituency: "It's a story that has emerged from time to time, usually without any names and has usually been denied by people in the past."

Brian Wilson, Labour's campaigns spokesman, said: "It has been less than 24 hours since the Cabinet discussed Europe. Already their agreed strategy is disintegrating and John Major is once more beleaguered and exposed."

"When confronted with his party's deep divisions on Europe, the Prime Minister has an extraordinary capacity to put his head in the sand. He chooses to dismiss out of hand the threat of 40 pro-European Tories to break away from his party. The Major motto is always the same: when in trouble, pretend it's not happening."

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, was reported by close colleagues to be "perfectly relaxed" about the Cabinet's toughened line. A close friend said: "Ken is making a virtue of necessity. He has thought it increasingly unlikely that the currency will be able to go ahead... He is happy."



Dennis Segal, Milupa managing director, said there was no proof its infant formula was to blame

Milk

Continued from page 1
babies of that age are eating a range of foods. We conduct a strict microbiological analysis of the plant every day and not one case of salmonella has been detected."

Scientists are carrying out tests to find the source of the infection, which could be in the raw materials, the factory, its workers or equipment. British mothers are being advised to discard remains of the suspect powdered milk along with the soaps and bottles that may harbor infection.

Health experts have warned parents against switching to cow's milk. Instead, they should buy an equivalent manufactured product.

Mothers should watch babies fed on the withdrawn product for symptoms, which include diarrhoea, vomiting and fever. The incubation period is three to seven days.

The alert was sounded by experts at the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre in Colindale, north London. Routine tests on samples this week caused alarm when they established that 12 babies—in Scotland, Yorkshire, the Midlands and South-East—had become infected with the unusual *Salmonella anatum*.

Of the 29,000 salmonella cases in Britain each year, only 50 involve this strain, and almost all those are adults.

The factory, which makes the product in Colmar, near Strasbourg, and is still working. Although it has stopped producing the formula for hungry infants, it continues to make Forward, designed for babies being weaned.

Dennis Segal, managing director of Milupa, emphasised there was no proof so far that its infant formula was to blame for the outbreak. Only a statistical link. "It is circumstantial evidence," he said. "It would be wrong to say the factory is at fault."

The Milupa brand is owned by the Dutch company Nutricia. It has set up 45 help lines on 0345 623600.

Mothers can be reassured despite scare over babies



Dr Thomas Stuttford

EACH year 25,000 British babies are fed on a brand of milk powder manufactured according to EU regulations, by the firm Milupa. The milk Milupa for Hungrier Bottled Babies is made from modified cow's milk with added vitamins and minerals. It is possible that there have been 10 cases of food poisoning in bottle-fed babies who have been given Milupa since October.

Any scare of this sort causes immediate anxiety, and the doctor's first duty is to reassure a worried mother that the odds of 25,000-10 make it unlikely that her apparently fit baby will have suffered. Furthermore, the mother should be told that withdrawal of the milk is a precautionary measure. As yet, no actual proven link between the cases and the milk has been made.

The mother will also be happier when she knows that the organism causing this infection, *Salmonella anatum*, usually causes mild symptoms, so mild that only two cases have needed admission to hospital. The doctor's second duty is to recommend any other milk powder which is just as efficient. The babies are unlikely to notice the difference and even if they do, their progress should not be halted.

The slogan "Breast is best" is one known to every young mother. The slogan has unfortunately caused a sense of inferiority in mothers who for some perfectly sound medical or domestic reason are unable to breastfeed. There are reasons why breastfeeding is recommended and, if it works well, there is no better method. If there are difficulties, it may well be that the baby will do just as well, or even better, on the bottle.

Breastfeeding provides the milk which has evolved for humans. Cow's milk contains more protein, and may well contain more fat. All milk-fed babies need additional vitamin D, routinely added to bottle-milk formulas. Human milk has less iron, but what it has is better absorbed.

One of the most important reasons why breastfeeding is recommended where possible is that the number of infections is very much less than it is in the bottle-fed. This recent alarm is a good indication of this. The breast-fed baby also receives a hefty dose of antibodies in his mother's milk.

Rigorous cleaning and sterilising a bottle provides some safeguard against the risk of gastrointestinal infections, but not of course if it is the milk powder which has been the vector for the bacteria.

Ninety per cent of women are anatomically and physiologically able to breastfeed. Failure of breastfeeding usually occurs because of painful nipples or breasts, but in other cases it stems from a dislike of the idea, either because the mother fears it will spoil the shape of her breasts, or because she has a psychological aversion to the concept.

Tunnelling protesters dig in for the night

Five protesters were last night locked behind a steel door in a tunnel dug in the path of a £65 million road improvement scheme. It was their second night spent defying bailiffs who had earlier removed some of their colleagues from "raviglous" built in the branches of trees at Fairmile Camp on the A30 near Exeter.

Trevor Coleman, Under Sheriff for Devon, said that the tunnel would be cleared today, after making sure that the four men and one woman occupying the tunnel were safe.

Russian talks

Michael Howard is to visit Moscow next week for talks about the threat to Britain from Russian gangs involved in organised crime and drug trafficking. The Home Secretary will have discussions with Anatoli Kulikov, the Minister of Internal Affairs, during his two days in Russia. They are also expected to discuss the terrorism threat.

Drugs charges

Seven Britons, alleged to have been part of one of Europe's biggest drugs rings, were remanded in custody by a Dutch court until April. The seven men and a Colombian are charged with helping to organise a £100 million racket to market heroin, cocaine, Ecstasy and hashish in the UK and across the Continent. Their trials will begin in April.

Fire stops reactor

One of the reactors at Hunterston nuclear power station in Ayrshire was closed yesterday after fire broke out in the turbine hall. Strathclyde Fire Brigade were called to the plant, but by the time they arrived the fire was already out. A spokesman for Scottish Nuclear said that a bearing had overheated, but there was no danger to the public.

Welsh protest

Welsh activists have launched their election campaign by occupying the offices of William Hague, the Welsh Secretary. Members of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, the Welsh Language Society, locked themselves into a room in Northallerton, North Yorkshire, in protest at Mr Hague's appointment.

Hostage threat

Security sources blamed the Ulster Defence Association for taking a mother and her three-year-old daughter hostage in a loyalist area of Belfast. Masked men burst into a house, tied up the woman and telephoned her husband, demanding money by threatening to set fire to his wife and daughter. He complied.

Midweek £10m

The National Lottery operator Camelot has guaranteed a jackpot of £10 million for the first two midweek draws, which begin on February 5. Camelot said: "As this is a key landmark for the National Lottery, a £10 million jackpot will, we hope, help to ensure that the midweek draw gets off to a flying start."

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School machete attack leaves boy in hospital

By LIN JENKINS AND RICHARD DUCE

A BOY was in hospital last night with serious head injuries after he was attacked outside his school by a gang of youths wielding a machete.

The 14-year-old was set upon by five other boys as he left Kidbrooke Secondary School in southeast London just before 4pm. He was beaten about the head by the gang outside the school gates before they ran off.

The boy, who has not been

THE WINTER SALE

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80-year-old widow's detective work helps track missing antiques to London auctioneer

French viscountess wins battle for stolen candelabra

By KATHRYN KNIGHT AND EMMA WILKINS

A FRENCH viscountess yesterday won her long and arduous battle to reclaim a pair of rare candelabra which were stolen from her home and then offered for sale at Sotheby's a decade later.

Mrs Justice Arden ruled in the High Court that the marble and gilt-bronze nine-branched candelabra, sent to auction by the antiques dealer Adrian Alan and worth £60,000, were the ones stolen from the chateau of Mme Nicole de Préal during a burglary in 1986.

Mr Alan, a Mayfair dealer, had told the court that he bought them from a New York gallery two years before the burglary and claimed that they were inferior copies of the originals, made after the death of the 19th-century sculptor Antoine-Louis Barye.

But yesterday, Mrs Justice Arden said it was clear that the candelabra, depicting the Three Graces, should be returned to their French home, where they had been kept for 150 years. "The evidence of Mme de Préal and her daughter in identifying the disputed candelabra and proving their provenance was in my judgment highly persuasive," she said.

The judge added that the deciding factor must be that Mme de Préal had found on the candelabra the initials of her great-grandfather, Emile Marzin.

The court had been told that the battle to win back the candelabra was a matter of family honour: for Mme de Préal, an 80-year-old widow whose late husband, the Viscount de Préal, fought with Bomber Command during the Second World War. She at-



Dealer Adrian Alan said the candelabra were his.



and friendship. The antiques bore an enamel cartouche engraved with the initials E.M. as well as Viscount de Préal's Légion d'honneur insignia.

The two candelabra formed part of a triptych, with a marble centrepiece depicting a mythological scene, the abduction of Angelica, a beautiful heroine, by a warrior astride a hippocentaur (a fabulous creature like a griffin but with the body and hindquarters of a horse).

The candelsticks were among 40 items stolen from the drawing-room of Mme de Préal's second home near Sagone, south of Paris.

For eight years she heard nothing until, in 1994, she received a telephone call from her local police, who told her that the candelabra were being offered for sale by Sotheby's in London.

Mme de Préal, who was sent a catalogue, examined the glossy photograph of the candelabra with a magnifying glass. Recognising them immediately as her own, she was even able to see the initials on each candelstick.

French police alerted Interpol and officers from Scotland Yard contacted Sotheby's. The auction was called off with just days to spare.

But the auction house returned the candelabra to Mr Alan, who refused to hand them over. She decided to sue. "They are of great sentimental importance to me," she told the court.

Mr Alan, who has been dealing in antiques for 32 years and specialises in 19th-century decorative items, said he had bought them from the Cheriff Gallery in New York. However, Mrs Justice Arden



Mme de Préal spotted the candelabra in a Sotheby's brochure. They had been stolen from her chateau in 1986.

said Mr Alan's evidence contained a number of weaknesses, as there were no witnesses and a lack of documentation to corroborate his version of events. She found that he bought them after the date of the theft, for between £5,000 and £6,000.

Costs were awarded against Mr Alan, who was not present in court. His solicitor, Michael London, said he was disap-

pointed with the judgment. However, it has been and remains his position that he bought the candelabra innocently and in good faith from a long established and reputable dealer in New York.

Mme de Préal was told that the candelabra would be returned when her French adviser, Neville Maryan Green, telephoned her at her Paris apartment. "It was a

very emotional conversation," Mr Maryan Green said.

"She was immensely relieved and proud. She told me: 'Now I will be able to sleep again.' She has invested so much money and time and her heart into these proceedings and she feels her family history has not been betrayed."

During the proceedings, Mme de Préal told *The Times*: "I adored them. I can

remember playing with them as a girl in my father's house. They are a part of my past and my family's history," said Mme de Préal, who has six children. "I brought this action because recovering the candelabra is a duty to my family, to my antecedents and my descendants."

She now eagerly wants to reunite them with the centrepiece.

Man, 82 vows to end life of crime

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

AN 82-YEAR-OLD "prolific" burglar may avoid another prison sentence after a judge ordered him to have a medical to see whether he was fit enough to go to jail. After hearing of his long criminal career, Judge Kevin Cutler told John Dean that he had "been in court more times than I have" but said he ought to be examined to see if he could cope with prison.

For his latest offence, Dean had pleaded guilty at Swindon Crown Court to breaking into the home of an elderly woman and stealing her pension and Post Office book. Dean, who was last jailed for burglary four years ago, hobbled into court and was helped into the dock by an usher.

Tom Hills, for the defence, said Dean, from Knowle, Bristol, was a "prolific" burglar. His health had rapidly deteriorated since he committed the offence in July last year. He had recently damaged his hip and was having difficulty breathing. Judge Cutler agreed to order a medical examination and told Dean: "This is to see whether you are fit enough for a term of imprisonment or not."

The case, which took place a week ago, was adjourned pending the medical check-up. At his home yesterday, Dean, who claims to have more than 50 convictions for burglary and to have served time in Parkhurst, Wandsworth, and Leyhill prisons, said he had spent half his life in jail and wanted to change. He said he had been in prison so often that he could hardly remember the first time but thought it was in the late 1930s.

"I'm a terrible burglar. I always got caught because I was drunk all the time," he said. "I've decided it's just not worth it. This is the last time I will ever be in trouble. I can't walk as far as the bottom of the road so how am I going to rob anyone?"

Barclay brothers win libel appeal

FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

THE Barclay brothers won their battle to sue a British journalist for defamation in a French court yesterday, but lost their claim for damages against the BBC.

John Sweeney, an Observer journalist, was ordered to pay FF20,000 (about £2,500) in damages by the court of appeal in Rennes for remarks made during an interview he gave about the brothers on October 4, 1995, to BBC Radio Guernsey.

The Barclays alleged that they had been falsely accused of corruption during the interview in connection with the Crown Agents' scandal in the 1970s.

However, the appeal court rejected the brothers' demands for damages against John Birt, Director-General of the BBC. They had originally sought FF400,000 (about £44,000) in damages from the BBC and Mr Sweeney.

The Barclays had already lost an earlier £108,000 criminal libel action against Mr Birt. They appealed after a court in Saint-Malo threw out their demand for damages last July when the judge found the case unconvincing.

They based their action on the fact that the interview could be heard in northern France and notably around Saint-Malo, the nearest part of

France to the Channel Islands. Counsel for the brothers denied at the time that his clients' motive had been to capitalise on France's strict privacy laws.

France is particularly attractive for litigants. Although damages are often lower than those awarded in British courts, the legal system is quick, offers the possibility of imposing a criminal sanction and of winning a prominent apology.

The Barclay brothers, who are ranked among the top 20 richest people in Britain, own the Ritz and have extensive media interests including ownership of *The European* and *The Scotsman* newspapers. The identical twins are known for their extreme secrecy and for the construction of their fortress-like neo-Gothic mansion on the Channel island of Breckon and for a legal battle they have launched against the feudal authorities on the island of Sark.

Mr Sweeney has written extensively about the Barclays, who are known to have been offended by his interest in their business affairs and particularly by an incident in which the journalist paid an uninvited visit to their island retreat in search of an interview.

Slimming tycoon cleared of theft

BY A STAFF REPORTER

THE founder of the Weight Watchers slimming empire walked free from court yesterday after Judge Butler, QC, said the prosecution of Bernice Weston had been "doomed to failure from the outset".

"The 59-year-old businesswoman had been charged with stealing beauty products worth £150 from a health club at the Dolphin Square complex in central London, where the Princess Royal has a home. She had also been accused of an alternative charge of handling them."

The offences, to which she pleaded not guilty at an earlier hearing, were alleged to have been committed in late 1995. But at Southwark



Weston: ordeal was "worse than nightmare"

Crown Court, Claudius Algar, for the prosecution, said he had no option but to drop the case because the Crown's main witness, Helen Bailey, a therapist, was honey-mooning and backpacking around New Zealand. He added: "It was a strong case against this defendant if we had had that witness."

But Mr Algar's observation prompted Judge Butler to retort: "I shall have something to say about that later." Timothy Kendall, for the defence, condemned Mrs Weston's arrest and prosecution as "misconceived from the outset". His client had "consistently and wholly denied" the allegations.

He went on: "It is a matter of concern to those who defend her that Detective Constable Adam Hayes, the officer in this case, took a blinkered view." His conduct "included a wholly unlawful arrest for alleged breach of bail, resulting in her staying in custody overnight."

The judge, who ordered not guilty verdicts to be recorded, said: "The case against this defendant was so flimsy as to be virtually non-existent."

Outside court, Mrs Weston, who has a flat in Dolphin Square, fought back tears as she described her ordeal as worse than a nightmare.

Baby boom ensures Archers' future

By ALEXANDRA FREAN
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

PRODUCERS of Radio 4's *The Archers*, which last night celebrated its 12,000th episode, have pledged to keep the rural soap opera running "to the year 2020 and beyond" through the creation of a whole new generation of the Archers clan.

The newest addition was announced last night when Ruth Archer — daughter-in-law of the patriarch Phil — revealed to her husband, David, that she was pregnant with their second child.

Insiders at the BBC's Pebbles Mill studios in Birmingham, where the farming soap opera is recorded, suggested last night that David's sister Shula, who was widowed three years ago, may be the next character to have a child. Shula, who has a young son, Daniel, may find love this year.

The next possible parent

- 1,000th. Nov 22, 1954: John Tregorran proposes to Carol.
- 2,000th. Sept 26, 1958: Tom Forrest marries Pru.
- 3,000th. July 27, 1962: Richard Todd opens fete.
- 4,000th. May 27, 1966: Uncharacteristically quiet.
- 5,000th. March 27, 1970: Walter proposes to Mrs P.
- 6,000th. Jan 25, 1974: Tony Archer proposes to Mary Weston. The engagement was later broken.
- 7,000th. Nov 25, 1977: Kate Aldridge's christening.
- 8,000th. Sept 25, 1981: Eddie Grundy proposes to Clarrie.
- 9,000th. July 26, 1985: Mopping up after big storm.
- 10,000th. May 26, 1989: Terry Wogan plays golf.
- 11,000th. March 26, 1993: Annelka Rice helps to refurbish the village hall.

could be John Archer, cousin of David and Shula, who is not married but has a girlfriend. In a surprise twist, the programme's makers are considering leaving Elizabeth Archer, David and Shula's sister, childless, even though she is married and settled.

Vanessa Whitburn, the programme's editor, would not comment on the speculation.

Unlike television soaps, the Archers has traditionally kept its storylines secret until they are broadcast. Sensational scripts are regularly shredded.

Ms Whitburn said: "We want to ensure that the programme is still here in 2020 and beyond. One of my responsibilities is to make sure that the new generation of Archers survives into the next

century. In 2012, Ruth's eldest child, Pip, will be 18. Will she now have a little brother or sister to help carry on the expansion at Brookfield Farm?"

Miss Whitburn said that she had wanted to mark the programme's 12,000th episode on an upbeat note, after a string of harrowing plot developments. The news will come as a relief to the programme's 4½ million fans.

In recent months the popular tenant farmers, the Grundys, have been fighting eviction by their money-grabbing and heartless landlord, Simon Pemberton. Shula has lost her job as Mr Pemberton's land agent and David faces the prospect of having to testify against the Grundys.

"The Archer family has been put in a compromising position," Ms Whitburn said. "With Ruth's pregnancy we want to show that, even in the bad times, there can be good times round the corner."



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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

5ft 5in MP stands up for the vertically challenged

By Andrew Pierce, Political Correspondent

THE shortest male Tory MP in the House of Commons launched a passionate defence of the rights of the vertically challenged yesterday.

Michael Stern, 5ft 5in in his stockinged feet, warned fellow MPs against the dangers of discriminating against under-sized adults. He was speaking in a Commons debate about new powers for the police to combat underage drinking in the streets. Mr Stern, 54, speaks from bitter experience. He still bears the scars of humiliation from being refused alcohol by publicans who thought he was still underage as he approached his thirtieth birthday.

"For someone like me, who is vertically challenged, I want to ensure that any new powers we give to the police are not abused," he said. "We have to ensure that they are not heavy-handed in the way they treat short people. When I was young I was always mistaken as being rather younger than I was because of my lack of inches. That continued into my adult life."

The MP for Bristol North-

west was on his feet during the second reading of the Confiscation of Alcohol (Young Persons) Bill. The Bill gives the police the right to confiscate alcohol from underage drinkers in public places.

Mr Stern insisted that safeguards should be written into the legislation, which he supported, and which has all-party backing. "My lack of inches meant that I was regularly challenged in my adult life when I bought alcohol. We must ensure that in our desire to do the right thing, by taking away alcohol from underage drinkers, we do not take away the self-respect of small people at the same time."

Mr Stern is from a small family. His wife, Jillian, measures 5ft and their daughter, Katherine, whose nickname is Tich, a little more. All three Sterns have long believed the dictum that small is beautiful. One of their favourite politicians is Lyndon Johnson who once said: "Anything above 5ft 5in is a waste of effort."

The MP, who is on the Thatcherite wing of the party



Stern was refused a drink in his late 20s

and is a former vice-chairman, has yet to scale the heights of ministerial office in his 13 years in the Commons. He admitted he had even suffered discrimination at the hands of the Tory party. In the 1970s, when he was seeking selection as a candidate, it was made clear by the Tory grandees in charge of the selection process that he would not make the grade. "There was a long period when the Conservative Party would not select small

candidates unless they were women," he said.

Even the sly deployment of platform shoes, which were the fashion rage at the time, failed to impress the selection panels. "I was told that I was literally not up to the job because I was not the regulation 6ft 4in which Tory MPs were expected to be."

Mr Stern, whose colleagues joke he was denied ministerial office because he could not see over the top of the Commons dispatch box, even has difficulties on cycling holidays abroad with his wife. "I have to ask for a ladies' mountain bike because otherwise my feet don't touch the ground," he said.

He believes he is, in good company. He pointed out that generals such as Napoleon, Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great were small in height but big in spirit. "I, too, can stand up for myself," he said. "I decided to speak up for those who cannot."

Katherine Stern derived some amusement from her father's intervention. "Did he really say he's 5ft 5in?" she said. "He's not you know. He's only 5ft 4in."



The new Escort, planned for launch in 1998, will be built abroad although the interiors may come from Britain

Ford takes curves in new Escort

By Kevin Eason, Motoring Editor

THE first Ford Escort to be built outside Britain will be a curvy, futuristic hatchback, according to pictures taken in the company's design studio.

Workers at the Halewood plant on Merseyside will not make the car because Ford decided that the factory was not efficient enough. Unions are balloting the company's 30,000 workers in Britain on whether to call a strike.

Pictures of the new Escort, planned

for launch in 1998 and currently being tested in Germany, are published today in the motoring magazine *Auto Express*. Even though the car will be built abroad, British designers have been responsible for much of its development. The interiors are expected to come from Ford's Dunton design complex in Essex while engines and transmissions could also be produced in Britain. Designers have abandoned the car's "square" styling for a dramatically rounded shape and tear-

drop rear side windows. Insiders describe it as the biggest design advance in Ford's small-car range since the 1980 launch of the MkII Escort — which became Britain's best-selling car for almost a decade.

Halewood will lose 1,300 jobs, a third of the workforce, when Escort production ends there. However, Ford emphasises that Halewood could get new investment building a people-carrier version of the new Escort, a seven-seater hatchback.

Peer ticked off for punching his former wife

By Shirley English

A SCOTTISH peer convicted of assaulting his former wife walked free from court and escaped a possible fine yesterday because of his "hitherto unblemished character".

Lord Rowallan, 49, who has been married three times, has fought a bitter custody battle, sold off the family estate and last year was sued for non-payment of a catering bill for his wedding buffet, was "admonished" by Sheriff Peter Gillam at Ayr Sheriff Court.

The peer, who was charged as John Corbett, was found guilty of punching Sandra Corbett, 35, his second wife, so that she fell unconscious. The attack took place at a show-jumping event at Muirmill Equestrian Club in November 1995.

Rowallan, who lives in a farmhouse near Fenwick, East Ayrshire, was alleged to have thrown a heavy punch to the back of Mrs Corbett's neck on his way to help Sophie, Dinning, his teenage step-daughter, who had fallen and was trapped under her horse.

Yesterday, the sheriff said: "I have regard to your hitherto unblemished character and the circumstances in which the assault took place in which you were understandably distraught. Under the circumstances you are admonished."

Both parties refused to speak as they left court yesterday. The maximum sentence for assault convictions for first offenders is three months in prison or a £5,000 fine.

Mrs Corbett, who is 5ft 3in, was felled by the blow from the 6ft 2in fourth baron who in the 1970s twice unsuccessfully

fully stopped for Parliament as a Conservative.

She told the court on the first day of the trial, which took place last November before being adjourned until yesterday, that her former husband was "a bully" who hit her because "there wasn't a man or anyone bigger around".

At the time of the assault, the couple had not spoken for a year because of a custody dispute over their children, which Rowallan lost. Mrs Corbett was a stable girl on Rowallan's estate before becoming his wife.

Their marriage ended four years ago when she left him for the former international showjumper John Brown, with whom she now lives in Symington, South Ayrshire.

She said that she had been standing with friends when she saw her former husband approaching. "The next thing I knew, I was being picked up by a friend. I had received a blow to the base of my skull."

She suffered whiplash injuries and was later treated in hospital at Kilmarnock.

Rowallan, who has no previous convictions, denied assault and punching her to cause injury. He claimed that Mrs Corbett had laughed contemptuously as he rushed to help Sophie, 15.

"I treated it with the contempt it deserved. At no time did I dench my fist and wallop anybody. It was more of a hand flick," he said.

Describing how there was "no love lost" between Mrs Corbett and himself, he claimed the assault allegation was a plot to get revenge on him. His stepdaughter needed eight operations after the accident, according to her mother, Rowallan's third wife, Claire.

Rowallan inherited the title after his father's death in June 1993. He sold the family estate and Rowallan Castle, near Kilmaurs, in 1989 to a property developer in what he described as "a sad but inevitable move".

Last year Rowallan settled out of court after being sued for £3,712 plus interest by the owners of the Fenwick Hotel who claimed that he had failed to pay the balance of a food and drink bill for his third wedding reception at his home last May.



Rowallan: his character "hitherto unblemished"

Prince misses a beat on a song by the King

By Audrey Magee

IT SEEMED like a good song with catchy lyrics and the Prince of Wales was impressed. The tune being performed for him on a royal visit was called *The Wonder of You*. There was even a line with the words: "You touch my hand and I'm a king."


So it may have seemed only polite for the Prince to ask one of the young performers in North Tyneside if he had written the song himself. Gavin Lovell, 24, then had the task of pointing out that it was an old hit by Elvis Presley.

The Prince was at a community centre when Mr Lov-

ell and another guitarist, Bradley Tighe, burst into their impromptu performance. The Prince stepped forward to thank them and to ask his question.

As diplomatically as possible, Mr Lovell pointed out the song's fame. It was at the top of the charts for six weeks in 1970. The Prince was 22 that year. Mr Lovell was not yet born.

The Prince spent two hours at the community centre in Longbenton, in the heart of West Farm housing estate. He met business leaders to discuss projects to help young people seeking work.



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Legal wrangle as writer plans to quit home where 19th-century designer spent last years

Sale puts public access to Morris house at risk

BY DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE writer and director Christopher Hampton has found himself involved in a lengthy wrangle with a society devoted to William Morris, the 19th-century designer and decorator, over the lease of the house in which Morris lived.

After eight years, Mr Hampton, best known for his adaptation of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, has decided to move out of Kelmscott House, a Georgian house in Hampstead in which Morris lived for the last 18 years of his life. It is on the market for £895,000 with an option to extend the 36-year lease.

Members of the William Morris Society are desperate to save it for the nation. An admirer donated the house to the society in 1970. Unable to afford to turn it into a museum, it let the four main floors and used the basement for its offices. An initial application for National Lottery cash has been turned down and the society plans to apply again.

Hans Brill, president of the society, which was formed in the 1950s and which has about 2,000 members, explained that, although the house had only a 36-year lease, the 1993 Leasehold Reform Act allowed the purchaser to acquire a 90-year extension. That would



Christopher Hampton has decided to move out of the house in which the designer William Morris lived

deny the public access to the historic building, he said.

Mr Hampton said he had gone out of his way to ensure that he sold the house to someone who would be sympathetic to Morris. "I'm doing my best," he said. "I gave them months to find the money to buy it for the nation and they couldn't." Despite a claim to have lost a prospective buyer, he hopes to exchange contracts next week.

Mr Brill said: "So far he has done what was legally required of him. By his lease, he was legally bound to offer it back to the trustees. We are grateful for his forbearance but, because of the time it took

to get the lottery appeal through, it takes time to raise £900,000."

John Kay, chairman of the Kelmscott House Trust, said he considered neither side had been obstructive in the negotiations.

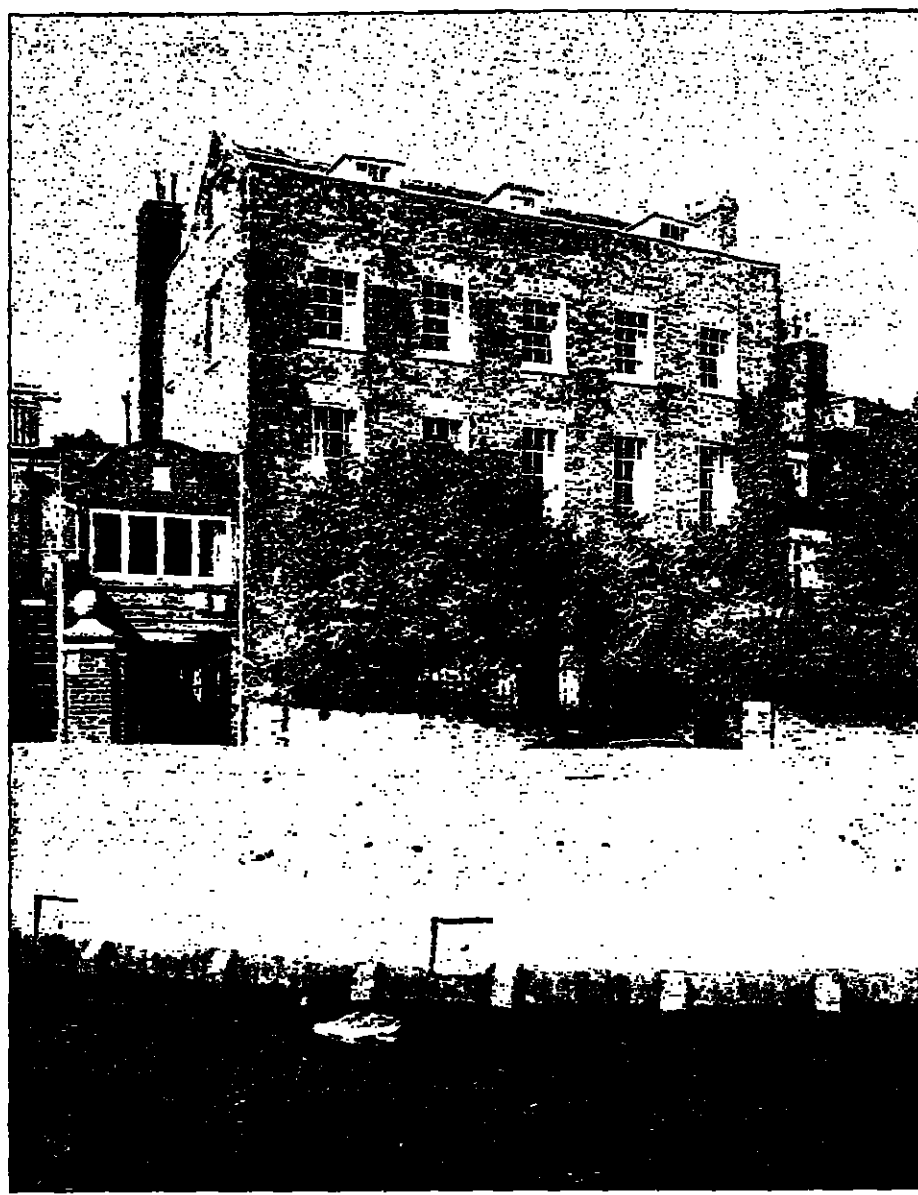
Kelmscott House, where Morris had his study and workshop, was visited by George Bernard Shaw, the artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Sir Edward Burne-Jones and the composer Gustav Holst. They were among leading figures drawn to a man whose talents as an artist knew no bounds. He founded the firm of Morris and Co to produce wallpapers, furni-

ture, tapestries and stained-glass and the Kelmscott Press to raise standards of book design and printing.

It was in Kelmscott House that Morris was active as a designer and socialist: he had a tapestry loom in one of the bedrooms. Period details include a chimney-piece designed by the architect Philip Webb as a wedding present for Morris.

The society has contacted Tony Blair who urged Mark Fisher, the Shadow Arts Minister, to take up the cause. Mr Fisher expressed concern that the sale would "tear Morris from his own building". Mr Brill said Hampton-Smith council had expressed interest in showing its collection of Victorian paintings, which include works by Burne-Jones, in the house. At the moment, they spend most of the time in storerooms. He added: "The trustees are meeting on January 30 and, unless I can bring them some positive indications that we might succeed, the house will be lost to the public."

A Heritage Lottery Fund spokeswoman said the application was turned down because "the heritage merit was not at risk and the difficult and costly work that would be required to convert the building into an art gallery was unsuitable".



Morris's unbounded talents drew leading figures of the day to Kelmscott House

Surgeon to face court over liver girl's death

BY SHIRLEY ENGLISH

A SURGEON accused of refusing a teenage girl a liver transplant on moral grounds, because she had experimented with drugs, is to fly back from the United States to appear in court in Scotland.

The fatal accident inquiry into the death of Michelle Paul, 15, was adjourned yesterday until April 28 to allow Dr Hilary Sanley to attend with legal representation. She now works in Virginia.

Aberdeen Sheriff Court was told on the second day of the inquiry that Miss Paul had suffered complete liver failure as a result of swallowing half an Ecstasy tablet. Sheriff Graeme Warner said Dr Sanley was contacted after Miss Paul's mother, Carolann Paul, 37, said in court on Thursday that her daughter was denied a new liver by the surgeon. It would have been her only hope of survival.

Miss Paul, from Aberdeen, died in November, 1995, six days after she was admitted to the transplant unit at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. Mrs Paul said Dr Sanley told her that, if they gave a liver to Michelle, "they would be denying someone else". Doctors had told her they took a team decision to deny her a new liver "on moral grounds". A family history of drug abuse had also raised concerns about post-transplant care.

Academic elite wins bulk of research cash

BY DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

VICE-CHANCELLORS yesterday defended the existence of an elite of universities after the decision to focus research funding on the most highly rated academics.

Top-rated university departments would receive 20 per cent more government money than those in the next category, the Higher Education Funding Council said. Those in Grades 1 or 2, the lowest of seven categories, would receive none.

Grade 2 departments have hitherto received government funds. Now 38 per cent of research departments at former polytechnics will be denied funding, compared with 3.5 per cent at traditional universities.

Sir Derek Roberts, Provost of University College London, which came fifth in the research league table, said that the awards undermined the existence of an elite group of universities. Twenty universities have ten or more of the top-rated departments, with the highest concentrations at Cambridge (44), Oxford (40), UCL (29), Bristol (20), and Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield (all 18).

Sir Derek objected to the term "Ivy League". He said that some universities concentrated on research excellence, others on undergraduate teaching. "The perception of an 'Ivy League' is that somehow it is all to do with prestige and privilege." One would not refer to the top half of the Football Premiership as an Ivy League, "as though they had got a divine right to be there", he said. "It is just a fact of life."

He added: "If you look through the results of the research assessment, you find Cambridge at the top and Luton at the bottom, and to

suggest they are equivalent in terms of the quality of education, the standard of degrees and their commitment to research is not just stupid, it is damaging to Luton. The point is recognising diversity."

Sir Derek said that he believed in an honest awareness of the differences between universities. "The fact of life is that it is wrong to believe we have a homogeneous system."

Sir Colin Campbell, Vice-Chancellor of Nottingham, which has 16 top-rated departments, said: "I think there is a consensus in the university system that there has to be selective investment to back the really strong departments. The key point is to keep the things we have that are world-class and in a position to compete with the other world-class institutions in North America, Europe and Australasia."

A spokesman for the funding council said: "We will focus money more narrowly at a subject level. The more top-rated departments you have got, the more money you are going to get."

Dr Peter North, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, again gave warning yesterday that universities faced a funding crisis because of "grant cuts" for equipment and teaching undergraduates. He wrote in Oxford's annual report that the whole university system was being damaged by a 34 per cent cut over the past decade.

"No commercial concern could have coped with cuts of this magnitude without reducing the quality of its goods or services," he said. "If this general reduction in funding continues, we shall end up with a second-rate university system."

Tests begin on potent American Aids drug

BY NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A NEW Aids drug that is potentially ten times more potent than any on the market has been developed by an American company. The drug, ABT-378, is being tested on healthy volunteers to check its toxicity.

The compound, developed

by Abbott Laboratories, is said to be effective against HIV which has developed resistance to other drugs. It belongs to a class called protease inhibitors, which, used in conjunction with older drugs, can reduce viral levels in HIV-infected people.

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Heritage group wants to save 20th century's hidden gems from developers

Hunt begins for finest churches of modern era

By Marcus Binney, Architecture Correspondent

THE hunt is on to find and list the 20th century's best and least-known churches before they are demolished, stripped of fittings or turned into flats.

Heading the list is the igloo-like chapel at Heathrow, built underground to isolate it from aircraft noise. The Anglican chaplain, the Rev David Smith, said: "There are no signposts to the chapel in any of the terminals. It's a beautiful place with amazing acoustics, open all day, every day, but spoilt by appalling light fittings."

The Heathrow chapel was designed by Sir Frederick Gibberd, better known as architect of Liverpool's Roman Catholic cathedral. Gibberd designed the chapel with a revolving floor which would turn to face Anglican, Catholic and Free Church altars at the push of a button.

The search has been launched by the Twentieth Century Society with an exhibition at the Royal Institute of

British Architects' Heinz Gallery. Its director, Kenneth Powell, said: "Twenty years ago, it was the Victorian churches which were being demolished and made redundant. Now it's our own century: not only inner-city churches, but churches in suburbs and on housing estates of the 1920s and 1930s."

In the 19th century, to build a church was the highest achievement for any architect, but, since 1900, church building has been seen increasingly as a backwater. Many remarkable postwar churches were never illustrated in any book or magazine, and the congregations think that because they are not in a guide book, they can't be of interest.

The broad-churchmanship of the C of E has produced an astonishing range of architecture in this century, which cannot be paralleled anywhere in Europe, from austere Protestant interiors to the most extravagant ceremonial-



The Chapel of St George at Heathrow, designed by the architect of Liverpool's Roman Catholic cathedral

ism. Elaine Harwood, one of the exhibition organisers, said: "We think there may be as many as 4,000 20th-century churches of all denominations in Britain. Yet only about 80 churches of the 1920s and 30s have been listed, and only 11 postwar ones, though the Department of National Heritage is considering another 33 recommendations."

The society was alarmed when the Church Commissioners gave permission in 1995 for the demolition of St

Erkenwald in Southend-on-Sea, Essex, a huge church by one of the most revered of early 20th-century traditionalists, Sir Walter Tapper. This was followed within months by the demolition of the Grade II* listed St Christopher's, at Withington, Manchester, and Holy Angels, Salford. Two highly rated churches, at St Oswald's, in Preston, Lancashire, and St Wilfrid's, in Brighton, were turned into flats in the 1980s.

The caricature image of a modern church with an apology for a spire and a leaking flat roof is rejected by the society. Alan Powers, its vice-chairman, said: "Even the reviled 60s were an exciting period of church building. The amazing aspect of 20th-century church architecture is its range."

Roderick Graddidge, an architect, said: "Too many people walk round churches as if they were art galleries. They should experience these churches as used for worship." Problems have arisen from

the experimental use of materials, such as very thin concrete and asbestos, but increased grants from English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund offer hope that problems can be solved. With £20 million available in grants each year, 20th-century churches may soon be queuing up for listing.

The exhibition, The 20th Century Church, is at the Heinz Gallery, 21 Portman Square, London W1, until March 8.

Time to follow the lead of our founding saints

Ian Bradley

MANY sources have supplied and replenished the pure living water of Christian faith in the British Isles over the past 1,500 years. Two particularly important streams began to flow in the period after the departure of the Romans. One had its source in Rome and entered England with St Augustine's mission to Kent, the other came from Ireland and entered Scotland with St Columba's journey to Iona.

It is a happy coincidence that, in 1997, we celebrate both these streams, this year being the 1,400th anniversary of St Augustine's arrival in Kent and of Columba's death on Iona. Each has contributed much to the Christian life and character of Britain — the Augustinian stream, with its broad, ecumenical tolerance, its lofty language and sensitive pastoral concern; the Columban stream, coursing through the rugged terrain of the Celts, with its fierce integrity and fervent enthusiasm, its austerity and its theological disputatiousness.

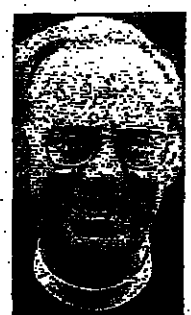
All who try to live as Christians in Britain at the tail end of the 20th century carry something of their legacy. Many will be taking part later this year in pilgrimages to commemorate the missionary journeys which they and their successors undertook.

Pilgrimage is an appropriate way to celebrate the events of 597. Both Columba and Augustine were Christians on the move, whose faith expressed itself in dynamic forms and who conceived the Church in terms of provisional rather than permanent structures. We can learn much from the example of our Celtic and Anglo-Saxon ancestors who worshipped God in simple wattle and daub huts that could easily be discarded, dismantled or extended as circumstances changed.

There are lessons to be learnt from their engagement with contemporary culture, their use of symbol, poem and story in preference to concept, argument and sermon, and the spirituality and artistic and scholarly achievements of the monasteries which they planted across the countryside. They brought complementary gifts to the infant British Church that are still much needed today: the order, stability and catholicity of Gregorian Rome as well as the more anarchic and free-wheeling spirituality of 6th-century Ireland.

The most important message that Augustine and Columba have for us is about leadership. Were they to come back in 1997, I suspect that both would be put down by jealous colleagues, hounded by journalists and squashed by committees anxious to preserve the status quo and a quiet life. We must ask whether we have the vision and the courage to find and to follow the saints in our own midst today.

The Rev Ian Bradley lectures in church history at Aberdeen University. His book *Columba: Pilgrim and Penitent* is published by Wild Goose Publications



Forum to bridge gap between three main faiths

By Ruth Gledhill, Religion Correspondent

A NEW body aimed at improving relations between Jews, Muslims and Christians is to be launched this weekend with the aim of widening the contact between preachers, teachers and leaders of all three faiths.

The Three Faiths Forum, the first body of its kind in Britain, is to be based in north London at the Sternberg Centre, Europe's largest Jewish cultural centre. The initiative comes as tensions between the three faiths, which share a common

Abrahamic root, have come to the fore in areas such as the former Yugoslavia. In Britain the leaders of all religions are increasingly aware of the need to work together and of what each faith can learn from the other.

Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan, speaking recently at the Reform Jewish movement's Leo Baeck College in London, said: "Only by celebrating what we have in common and understanding and tolerating our differences can we offer hope for a better future. This is particularly true with regard to the Abrahamic

faiths, for Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all branches of the same family."

The Three Faiths Forum will work alongside organisations such as the Interfaith Network, the Council of Christians and Jews, the Maimonides foundation and the Abrahamic forum, set up last October by the International Council of Christians and Jews to improve contacts between the three faiths.

The forum has the backing of Dr Zaki Badawi, chairman of the Council of Imams and Mosques of Great Britain, and has been welcomed by

the Board of Deputies of British Jews. It was set up by Sir Sigmund Sternberg, a businessman and philanthropist, chairman of the executive committee of the International Council of Christians and Jews.

Sir Sigmund said: "The forum is open to all those who, while adhering to their respective religious faiths, are committed to the vital task of developing mutual respect. It is hoped, through dialogue conducive to friendship and trust, to widen the contacts between preachers, teachers and writers from all three faiths."

The Right Rev Richard Harries,

Bishop of Oxford, who chairs the Council of Christians and Jews, said: "This will help to increase understanding and dispel some of the prejudice that is around. Islam does still suffer from an awful lot of stereotyping in this country."

Dr Richard Stone, who helped to set up the Maimonides foundation, said: "I am keen that Jews should have closer relationships with moderate Muslims, that Muslims support Jews in problems we have, and that Jews support Muslims."

At your service. Weekend, page 15

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Internet army vies with crusty colonels to spot first cuckoo

By Nick Nuttall

RETIRED colonels, the traditional chroniclers of the first cuckoo of spring, are facing stiff competition this year from thousands of schoolchildren armed with tiny video cameras and computers. The pupils will attempt to record for the first time the exact spot where the bird lands and calls.

It is hoped the children will also chronicle the arrival of frog spawn in ponds, the opening of the first snowdrop, and when and where the first swallows leave to return to South Africa.

Pupils across Britain are to become desktop naturalists, exchanging information over the Internet to map the passage of the seasons, under the scheme launched by the environmental charity Groundwork and backed by the National Grid. The organisers are planning to plug the cameras into nests and nest boxes when animals and birds take up residence. It is also hoped to extend the project to

Birdwatchers have identified what they believe to be the first sighting of a wild American canvas-back duck in Britain. The duck, a male, was spotted in Norfolk in a group of pochards, a common and similar-sized duck that migrates to Britain for winter. It was seen flying between Downham Market and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust's reserve at Welney. If confirmed, it will be the first sighting in Britain since records began in the 1950s.

schools in Europe, where many migratory birds, especially in Mediterranean countries, are shot for fun or sport. It is hoped that by involving children the practices might eventually be outlawed.

Instant access to the nests of birds, such as blue and great tits, is being made possible by microcameras — tiny video cameras — linked into the

Internet. It means the school children can witness egg laying, hatching and feeding over computer lines from their classrooms.

John Rhymer, head of the Bishopwood Environmental Education Centre in Wrexham, who is helping to mastermind the scheme, said yesterday that microcameras had already been installed underneath his centre so that pupils could watch mice and voles moving in and out of their homes to forage. He said it was hoped to install microcameras in the homes of other animals, including badger sets and rabbit burrows. Dormice, nesting at a reserve in Bramley Firth, Hampshire, are also set to become television stars.

Mr Rhymer said that because the cameras had infra-red emitters, producing small amounts of heat, they would be switched off during hibernation so that the animals were not tricked into believing it was spring.

Instead the cameras will be



Becky Jones, 8, places a camera in a bird's nesting box at Bishopwood Environmental Educational Centre

switched on when the dormice awaken, so that schoolchildren, plugged into the Internet, can watch the creatures coming and going from nests live on their computers.

Mr Rhymer said: "It will make a change for children to register the first cuckoo of spring, outdoing all those

retired colonels who battle it out in the newspaper letter columns."

He said many teachers were excited because they and their pupils would be getting free weather information, sent over computer lines, from eight automatic weather stations from Newcastle to Plym-

outh. Educationalists behind the project, called Four Seasons, hope the information gathered by the schools will help scientists studying the impact of global warming.

Over several years the recording of information on wildlife and seasons will, it is hoped, give clues as to whether

rising temperatures are affecting animals and plants.

Dave Betts, education manager at Groundwork, said yesterday: "By delivering the national curriculum through real-life environmental projects, teachers in the class room have access to a range of new resources."

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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University bird expert guilty of disturbing nests

By Michael Hornsby, COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

A RESPECTED ornithologist and his accomplice were convicted yesterday of intentionally disturbing protected rare birds in their nests.

The case was the latest to result from police raids on the homes of bird enthusiasts in eight counties in late 1994 when more than 11,000 birds' eggs, as well as documents and photographs, were seized.

Police gathered intelligence from a raid two months earlier on the Red Lion Hotel in Salisbury, Wiltshire, during the annual dinner of the Jourdain Society, a registered charity devoted to the scientific study of birds' eggs. Bird conservationists have long suspected the society of being used for exchanging information on the black-market trade in birds' eggs, an allegation which the society strenuously denies.

Andrew Dixon, 31, a research lecturer at Sunderland University and author of academic papers on bird breeding biology, and Andrew Lawrence, 35, of Brynmawr, Gwent, were each given a conditional discharge for 18 months by Salisbury magistrates. Dixon was ordered to pay £500 towards prosecution costs and Lawrence £350.

Dixon was found guilty of

three offences of deliberately disturbing stone curlews on Salisbury Plain and black-tailed godwits in Lancashire.

Lawrence was convicted of two offences of disturbing peregrine falcons. Thirteen other charges against Dixon, and four against Lawrence, involving alleged disturbance of red kites, hobbies, peregrine falcons, Dartford warblers, girl buntings and goshawks, were dismissed for lack of evidence after a five-day trial.

The court accepted that Dixon had a valid licence allowing him to visit the nests of peregrine falcons for research purposes. Paul Rice, for the prosecution, said that a diary kept by Dixon contained details, such as the size of egg clutches, which he could only have discovered by looking directly into the birds' nests. Expert witnesses called by the prosecution said that birds of prey were peculiarly susceptible to human interference.

For the defence, Peter Codner submitted that no wrongdoing had been proved. There was no direct evidence that any bird was disturbed except for the three cases of the peregrine falcons "where Dr Dixon was carrying out a lawful duty for which he is licensed", he said.

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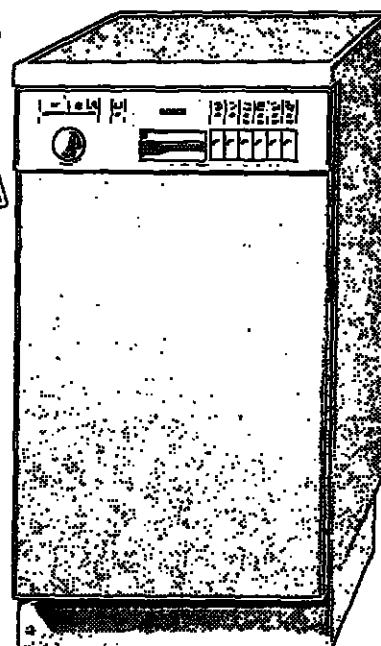
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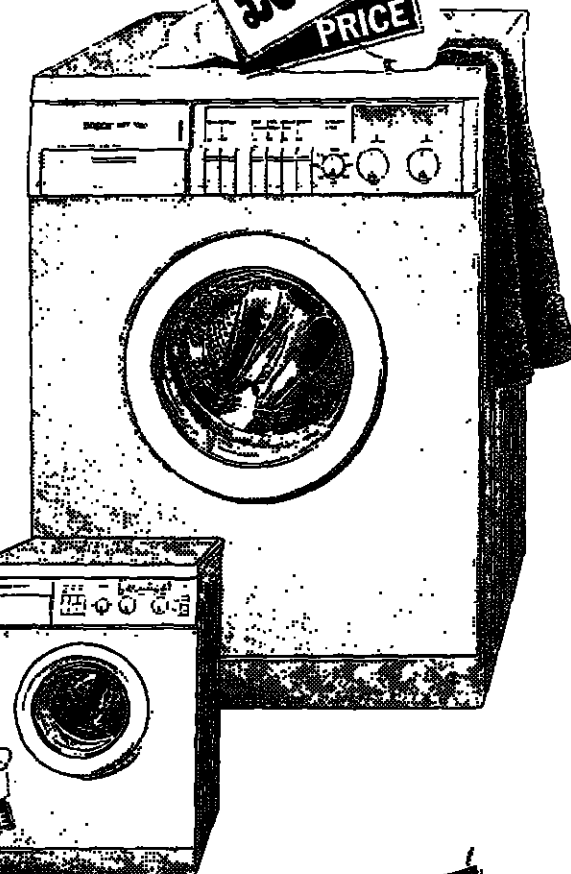
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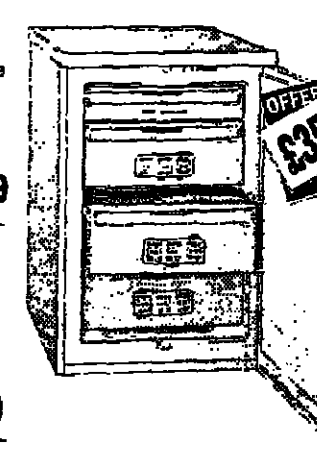
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Museum vandals destroy 50 years of flying history

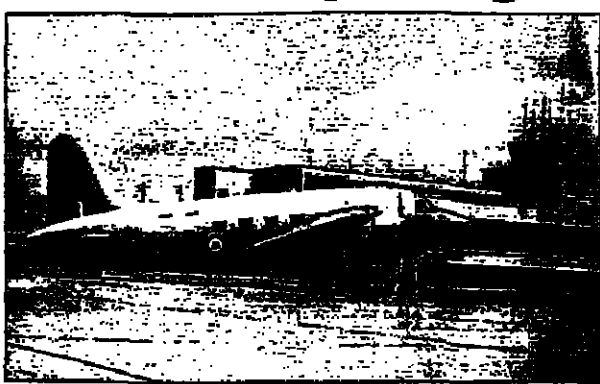
BY PAUL WILKINSON

A VINTAGE aircraft that took two years to restore has been destroyed in an arson attack by vandals. The Vickers Valetta, one of only three of its type in the world, was set alight on its stand outside the North East Aircraft Museum in Sunderland.

Dave Charles, the museum chairman, said yesterday that he wept as he watched firemen damping down the ruined aircraft. "I had to walk away because I started to cry. I realise it is just a big piece of metal, but it represents this country's heritage and a lot of work by a dedicated group of volunteers, all of whom are heartbroken about what has happened."

Mr Charles, 34, added: "There are only two other Valettas in the world now. It was so rare that it would be impossible to put a price on it. I have been involved with the museum for 16 years and each year I travel up to 7,000 miles on business connected with it. But after this I have to wonder about the long-term future of what we are trying to achieve."

The Valetta was based on



The Vickers Valetta in its RAF heyday at Istanbul airport. It was used mainly for transporting VIPs

the wartime Wellington bomber, designed by Barnes Wallis, inventor of the bouncing bomb. It incorporated the Wellington's fuselage and engines and the first one of its type entered service with the RAF 50 years ago as a replacement for the Dakota. Used as a transport plane, it could carry 16 VIPs, 36 parachutists or light vehicles such as Land Rovers. It was known affectionately as the Flying Pig because of its tubby appearance.

The vandalised Valetta first flew on January 9, 1950, and

saw service with the RAF between 1951 and 1968, when it made way for the Hercules, variants of which are still in use today. It spent much of its life as VIP transport and, coincidentally, a lot of its flying was from the British air base at the Maltese capital, Valetta, after which the aircraft was named in honour of the wartime siege of the island. It also spent time in Germany and Gibraltar.

The plane, fitted with two Bristol Siddeley Hercules engines, is 65ft long and has a wingspan of 89ft. Scores were

built during the 1950s, but most were sold for scrap when they were decommissioned. The two other survivors are in the Royal Aircraft Museum at Wolverhampton and the Norfolk and Suffolk Aviation Museum.

The wrecked aircraft was bought in 1969 by the Sunderland Flying Club, which kept it for ten years before handing it over to the museum. It was the largest aircraft in the collection until the museum obtained a Vulcan bomber in 1983.

Enthusiasts who had restored the plane in time for last year's Sunderland Airshow, were devastated at its destruction. Craig Blundred, the museum publicity officer said: "We are disgusted that something like this could happen. The aircraft can never be replaced. Our members and enthusiasts around the country will be saddened that heritage like this has been destroyed. This year was going to be the Valetta's fiftieth anniversary and we were planning a special celebration for it."

"It had to stay outside because there was no room to



There was no room for the burnt-out plane, which has an 89ft wingspan, inside the Sunderland museum

keep it inside the museum. In a sense it was vulnerable, but there is little that can be done to stop such determined and stupid vandalism."

A spokesman for Northumbria Police said: "The plane has been a target of vandal attacks in the past but this time it was completely burnt

out. Our officers are investigating. This was a senseless crime that destroyed an irreplaceable part of our nation's heritage."

A spokesman for the RAF said: "It is disgraceful that someone should choose to destroy a historic aircraft in this way. We hope the police

are successful in bringing those responsible to justice."

Mr Charles said: "In one moment of mindless vandalism they have wiped out two years of strenuous effort and 50 years of history. It sickens me to think about it. It is impossible to replace and was far too badly damaged to save."

We are all feeling a great sense of sadness and loss at the moment."

Private hospitals win VAT appeal

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

A VAT windfall worth more than £100 million could be paid to private hospitals after a Court of Appeal ruling. A five-year legal battle brought by a group of private health companies, which claimed they should not pay VAT on drugs and some surgical appliances, has ended in a victory against Customs and Excise.

The repayment of the money has been frozen, however, after Customs announced yesterday that it will seek leave to appeal to the House of Lords, claiming that it will consider asking Parliament for changes in legislation that would oblige private hospitals to pay VAT.

Barry Hassell, chief executive of the Independent Health Care Association, said: "The importance of the victory for the independent sector is that this moves us towards a level playing field with the NHS. The NHS is able to recover all of its VAT whereas we have not been able. We, as individuals, either need hospitals or we do not. If we do need them, the fact that it is a private hospital or NHS should have no bearing on VAT."

The legal fight against a Customs ruling that private hospitals could not reclaim VAT on purchases of medical supplies was led by the Wellington Hospital in London.

A Customs spokesman said: "The appeal court ruling has provided a tax break for private hospitals that the taxpayer will basically have to foot. It is in everyone's interest for us to appeal. The money will be frozen until all avenues of appeal have been exhausted."

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Ashton: expressed relief

Vicar is acquitted of stealing cheques

BY RUSSELL JENKINS

A VICAR was acquitted yesterday of embezzling more than £7,000 from parish funds.

The Rev Stephen Ashton, 41, denied three charges of theft, dating from 1989 and 1990, when he was vicar of St Wilfrid and St Anne, in Newton Heath, Greater Manchester. The prosecution at Manchester Crown Court alleged that he applied for money from the Ecclesiastical Insurance Fund to cover claims for vandalism and theft. It was said that cheques were siphoned off into a secret church account and into his bank account. A retrial was ordered after a trial in May last year.

In January 1994, Mr Ashton, who became vicar of Braeg with Germoe, in Cornwall, appeared before magistrates in Launceston, charged with stealing church artefacts. They were told that Mr Ashton, who had been treated for depression, had stolen four prints from Morwenstow Church, Cornwall, and a plaster figure from St Mary's, in Par. He was sentenced to 100 hours' community service.

At that time, his solicitor said that Mr Ashton had been under strain. As a campaigner against the ordination of women priests he had received threats. He resigned from the church over the issue and received a £24,000 payoff.

Mr Ashton said outside court yesterday: "I am extremely relieved. I have always maintained my innocence."

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Shop stewards angry at rejection of peace plan to end Liverpool dispute

Dockers threaten to intensify strike

BY TIM JONES

DOCKERS in Liverpool yesterday threatened to continue Britain's longest current strike "with renewed ferocity" after their peace plan was rejected by port managers.

The dispute has gone on for 16 months, four months longer than the miners' strike. It has been soured by allegations of arson, intimidation, assault and thuggery. The homes of directors of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company have been attacked, strike-breakers have been threatened and a community divided.

Yesterday Jimmy Nolan, leader of the shop stewards, said the dispute could end by the dockers forming themselves into an employment agency to provide staff to port employers. He claimed the dockers could raise £500,000 towards the cost of an agency in which the company would have a controlling stake to enable the men to continue as members of the pension fund.

But he insisted that, in return, workers from the Drake Potts agency, who took over their 329 jobs, should be dismissed. Mr Nolan said: "We recommend that they



Police attempt to clear demonstrators at Mersey Docks. The 16-month dispute has been soured by allegations of assault and intimidation

remove all the labour that they have used during the dispute. If they do that, we will be happy. Then we can sit down and resolve the problem."

But the offer was rejected by Eric Leatherbarrow, one of the company directors. He said: "Since the Drake men started, work productivity has increased by 50 per cent and our customers have renewed confidence in us. We have indicated

we would support the establishment of a co-operative on a fully commercial basis, but the suggestion that it should replace the Drake workforce, who have so dramatically transformed the prospects of the port, is totally unacceptable."

"To accede to such a demand would seriously undermine the port's excellence, performance and confidence

of customers." He said the new development should not distract attention from the strike leaders' refusal to hold a secret ballot on the company's own offer. This involves re-employing the men for 12 weeks and then paying off all but 40 of them, who could apply for jobs, with a £28,000-a-head redundancy package for the others.

Most of the striking dockers

are over 50 and believe they should be able to hold on to their former jobs until they retire before handing them down to their children or relatives. Bobby Morton, a shop steward, said: "The hardship we have endured has been terrible, with debts piling up and houses being repossessed, but we are determined to achieve justice."

During the dispute, Mr

Leatherbarrow's home has been attacked, its windows shattered by bricks. Only prompt action by neighbours prevented a potentially fatal incident when the wooden garage door of Trevor Furlong, the company's chief executive, was doused with petrol and set ablaze.

The dockers' leaders deny that any of the sacked strikers

Latest football score: the blind are leading the blind

BY DANIEL MCGRORY

SUPPORTERS gathering on the terraces for a Cup match today will be asked to curb their natural inclination to barrack and brawl. Rattles and klaxons are banned.

The players are blind and need to be able to hear the clatter of 100 ball bearings packed inside their football and to hear instructions from their goalkeeper, who is partially sighted.

However, the players do encourage the honoured tradition of having their fans berate the referee with insults about how the match officials need their eyes testing for some of the decisions.

Gavin Griffiths, who will be playing this afternoon, said: "We hate the idea of people being over-sensitive. We just want to play."

While this is the weekend for some of the biggest footballing names to concern themselves with the FA Cup, footballers from five teams for the blind and visually impaired meet in Coventry at the Midlands Sports Centre for the Disabled in the first tournament of its kind.

Walls of pain from the pitch are often louder than in most other games. Mr Griffiths, who helped to organise the tournament, admitted: "Our tackling is a lot rougher and looks more brutal because you are not sure where the other player is."

Those taking part say the bone-crunching noises make it more exciting. "Referees have been a bit too lenient in the past on our clumsy tackles, and we want them to tighten up a bit," they play in teams of five a side, which can be men and women, and on enclosed courts so that the ball does not go out of play, but Mr Griffiths, 23, said: "We want to play on grass because our game is getting faster."

They do not change ends at half time, so as not to disorientate themselves. Players use their arms to feel how close they are to the outside of the pitch. They allow the ball to go over waist height as they like to head it, even though

it is heavier than a normal FA match ball.

For international games, the players have a coach behind the goal giving directional instructions, but on today they will rely on their goalkeeper and "on listening for the thud of the other fellow's boots coming towards you. We are like bats relying on echoes." For penalties, the referee will place the ball and then line up the player.

Mr Griffiths, from Earlsdon, Coventry, has been blind since he was two. He believes that too many blind and visually impaired players give up the sport when they leave college.

In a recent international tournament, England lost in the final to Spain only in the last few minutes. Angela Weller, of British Blind Sport, said that football was growing in popularity, as were many other blind sports. "The blind can do so many sports with just a little bit of help. They don't want separate rules."

In golf, players rely on a sighted caddy to describe the hole and any obstacles. Sprinters in athletics run alone against the clock, with someone halfway along the track shouting instructions. For longer dis-

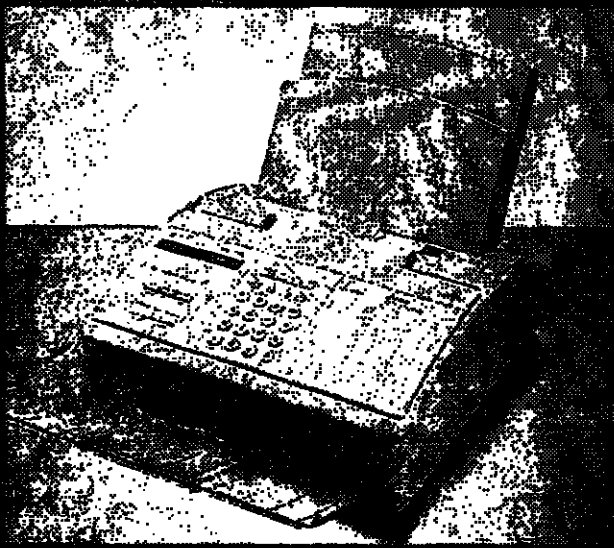
tance, the athlete will be tethered to a sighted runner, but the blind competitor must stay in front to avoid allegations of being pulled.

For long jump, triple jump and high jump, they count the number of steps to the takeoff board. Cricketers use a soft ball about the size of a foot-ball, again filled with ball bearings. The wicket is only 18 yards long. Competitors in judo feel the size of their competitor, and then begin the match by holding on to each other.

Blind competitors also take part in riding, bowls, ten-pin bowling, cycling, archery, javelin throwing and shot putt. Angela Weller said: "As with so many disabled, they want to play the sport just like the able-bodied."

Sport, pages 54-60

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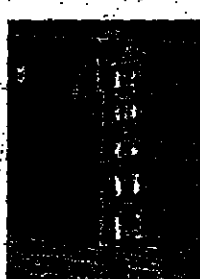
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OPINION

Is it her or isn't it? Why Spain and Hollywood are trading insults over the alleged Monroe sex movie



CINEMA

Golden age of the silver screen: London showcases America's fabulous movie theatres

THE TIMES ARTS



ON MONDAY

View halloo! To hunt or to ban hunting? Melvyn Bragg adds his distinctive voice to the fray



NEXT WEEK

The changing face of the capital is revealed in a controversial new Museum of London show

The big news of the week? Step aside, Fortillo. Wait your turn, Clinton. Don't rain on my parade ground, General Sir Peter de la Billière. Spain and America are going to war over a pornographic film allegedly starring Marilyn Monroe.

Yes, I thought that gross exaggeration would add a little spice to your cornflakes. These are the facts. Or perhaps they aren't facts, but that's all part of the story. Some while back, a Spanish film festival announced that it was going to unveil a short but action-packed movie showing Monroe having sex with what the showbiz paper *Variety* describes intriguingly as a "scrawny man".

Every historic discovery comes with a plausible yarn attached, and this is no exception. The 16mm film was allegedly made in 1947, sold for a few dollars at a Paris flea market in 1977, and does indeed feature a game young lass who looks something like the pre-makeover Norma Jean Baker. The revelation, if that is what it

Some like it hot, but not that hot

is, has not been rapturously received in the States. The Spanish say that their find has been authenticated by the American Film Institute. The institute says the authentication is itself not authentic. The Monroe estate has declared itself saddened and sceptical. American film critics claim that, even if the face is Monroe's, the body isn't. (How do they tell these things?) Hugh Hefner has cast his expert eye over the disputed flesh and announced that it is "an obvious hoax".

The Spanish retort that Hollywood is just cross that its greatest screen goddess has been exposed as a jumped-up porn-movie player. They have "run tests" on the film, believe it to be genuine, and are going to show it next weekend. Four times, actually. Now the headline between Washington and Madrid is zinging with indignation.

Next, *The New York Times* will weigh in with a ponderous editorial. The Monroe Porn-Film is well on its way to becoming the Turin Shroud of our time.

All this strikes me as odd. When the "was Jane Austen gay?" row was raging in the raucous columns of the *London Review of Books* last year, one could understand why the exchanges ignited violent passions. The question does fundamentally affect the way one reads the novels.

But the revelation that Monroe had casual sex with scrawny men — and indeed with stocky men, paunchy men, dumpy men and lots of men called Kennedy — is hardly news. What's annoyed Hollywood about this little movie, I think, is the fact that it punctures her on-screen mystique. The point about Monroe's cinematic allure, surely, was the tension between



RICHARD MORRISON

summering sexual promise and wide-eyed innocence. Shatter that equilibrium with some grainy skin-flick that reveals everything, and you rob Hollywood's greatest sex symbol of her erotic power.

What I want to know, though, is what happened to the scrawny man. If he is still alive, he could confirm whether his partner was the real Marilyn. Or could he? Were they ever properly introduced before they played their epic scene? I fear we may never know.

Mystique is an important part of every branch of entertainment. Is it not? How else can one explain the strange magnetism that impels otherwise sane folk to part with huge sums of money in order to be in the same stadium as an adored icon — even though logic tells them that the experience will be deeply unsatisfactory?

This gloomy question is prompted by a letter from an English reader, Derek Walker, who attended the New Year's Eve concert given a few weeks ago by our old

tenorial friends, Messrs Pavarotti, Domingo and Carreras, in Vancouver. Like many others in the stadium that night (to judge from the scathing reports in the Canadian press) he is furious. "I paid £540 for our two tickets, which is expensive by any standard," Mr Walker writes. "But we found ourselves at one end of a large football stadium with the stage at the opposite end."

Well, so far so commonplace. Paying £200 to be at the other end of a stadium from Pavarotti is one of the defining experiences of modern culture. Another is finding out later that, because supply greatly exceeded demand, you are sitting next to someone who picked up a ticket for a mere £30 or so, as many in Vancouver discovered. But let Mr Walker continue with his sorry tale:

"We could only see the singers

courtesy of two video screens, but as we were so far away the sound and vision was out of sync. The ultimate disgrace was that although the publicity indicated that the three tenors would sing up to and through the midnight hour, they left the stage at 11.50, and at 11.55 the whole orchestra left. We were left with an unknown chat show host and the choir — the former remarking that he did not recall being abandoned before."

Mr Walker has written to the concert promoter demanding a refund. Good luck to him. *SPS News* has reported that while the Three Tenors banked £51 million each after the concert and the promoter rather more than that, local sponsors lost £50.4 million. That's showbusiness, I guess.

After reading Mr Walker's letter I said to my wife: "If you ever see me extract £400 from my wallet to pay for tickets to hear a large tenor sing in a football stadium, you have my permission to shoot me." "Don't worry," she replied. "I've never seen you open your wallet."

It is March 1927, and you are seated in one of 6,214 red plush seats monogrammed with an R. Franklincense wafts through the air-conditioning vents. You have been conducted to your seat by one of a corps of 125 hand-picked ushers, each as intensely trained in decorum as a West Point cadet. This is New York's Roxy, billed as the "Cathedral of the Motion Picture" and the creation of Samuel Lionel Rothas, who went on to mastermind Radio City Hall.

The golden age of the movie theatre — Americans never call them cinemas — is celebrated in a current London exhibition (and accompanying book), *Ticket to Paradise*. The writer and photographer John Margolies has travelled tirelessly across America discovering movie palaces great and small, demolished and closed, as well as a significant number enthusiastically restored.

Whether in big cities or one-horse towns, American movie theatres were brighter, brasher and showier than almost anything the urbanity of Europe could tolerate. The Tutankhamun "discoveries" of the 1920s inspired in small towns across Utah and Illinois

Dream palaces

Marcus Binney takes his red plush seat for a celebration of America's golden age of movie theatres

Egyptian buildings more colourful than the Hoover factory, complete with life-sized "mummy" figures executed in shining glazed tiles. Out west the fashion was for facades inspired by Latin American Baroque churches, all twisted columns and writhing corals.

In California, names such as *Empire*, *Crest* and *Franklin* were displayed in illuminated letters as large and bright as the gaudy and crosses on the Org. Tower on the Thames. Neons sparkled over canopies like tiaras, while the winged figure of *Madam Butterfly* on

a theatre in Milwaukee was lit up by more than 200 bulbs.

The most magical interiors were the "atmospherics", mainly the creations of the architect John Eberson, whose auditorium at the Warner in Atlantic City was like the square of a Spanish town, overlooked by ornamental facades with balconies. Above was a deep blue sky, floating clouds and hundreds of twinkling stars in an astronomically correct heaven.

Initially some of the investment came from the punters themselves. "Are you getting your share from this wonder-

ful business?" ran a flyer for a chain of motion picture theatres being built in Chicago in 1910. Later the money to build these extravaganzas came from studios such as Warner, Paramount and Fox, which owned chains of theatres until, perhaps disastrously, they were forced to sell under anti-trust laws in the 1950s. This was also the era when out-of-town drive-ins spelt doom for main-street movie theatres, but even here the inexhaustible Margolies finds illuminated hoardings as flamboyant and vulgar as the Chevies parked there every night.

There have been tragic losses, including the Roxy in New York, demolished in 1960, but with others the turnaround has been speedy and dramatic. The Fox in St Louis, closed in 1978, was soon restored to all its Siamese Baroque splendour, complete with a grand staircase in gold, ivory and marble.

Hollywood may be the city of dreams, but every little town in America was dreaming too.

The exhibition *Ticket to Paradise* is at 26 Store Street, London WC1 until February 1. Photographs taken from *Ticket to Paradise*, published by Bullfinch



The 1926 Hollywood Theatre in Portland, Oregon and, right, the Spanish colonial-style Fox Westwood Village in Los Angeles

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Globalisation: is it the death of Leviathan?

Harold James says trade will force Europe to abandon big government

Tony Blair recently opened up what will be the key political issue for the next century: the size of the State. He pointed out that when Clement Attlee left office in 1951, state spending amounted to about 30 per cent of national income (whereas the current level is more than 40 per cent). And he came to the conclusion that there inevitably would be a critical examination of the size of the public sector in the next few years.

The traditional understanding of what states do is now challenged by globalisation: the increasingly rapid integration of the global economy. The process of managing reform of the State is far from being a simple political task.

An unprecedented expansion of the State accompanied the first Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries. New wealth gave greater resources to governments, and new problems called for collective solutions. By the late 19th century, a German economist, Adolph Wagner, even formulated a "law" of the constant growth of state expenditure, and of the increasing share of the State in national income. The organisation of the new states, bureaucratic and hierarchical, was also mirrored in business organisation, with numerous layers of authority and control. At the moment, Wagner's law is going into reverse.

Collective management from the top down — the characteristic behaviour of the modern state — will stand in the way of effective institutional adaptation to global change. In addition, transfer payments — increasingly the business of the late 20th-century state — are the opposite of wealth creation.

One answer sometimes given is that the global market will simply force states to adapt. Indeed, in some countries Wagner's law of increasing state expenditure, characteristic of the first Industrial Revolution, has already gone into reverse. By attacking universal entitlement programmes, some countries (notably New Zealand, Chile, but also Ireland) have radically reduced the share of public expenditure of national income. Similar reforms, in particular the elimination of many subsidies to the prosperous middle classes, are urgently needed in other European states, including Britain. But in practice, states have a tendency to postpone necessary reform, until a sudden collapse of confidence forces an adjustment that would have been much more painless if it had been undertaken in a timely way. Britain had a peculiarly agonising case of this in 1976.

Many of the institutional adaptations required in responding to globalisation can best be tackled in an international framework, rather than at a national level. Some aspects of this new economic order are relatively well understood, even though the case-by-case application of such principles is full of arguments and difficulties. This is the case in working out a framework for the effective liberalisation of trade in goods and services, and of capital flows.

Liberalising labour laws to allow and encourage more flexible forms of employment is also a task that may be easier to accomplish politically through international agreement, because otherwise there will be constant national suspicions and recriminations that other countries are engaging in "unfair" or "social protectionism".

It may even be the case that arrangements to stabilise government budgets can more easily be worked out on a cross-national basis. Some countries have managed heroic feats of fiscal retrenchment only to let expenditures and deficits rise again. Britain is a striking example. After surpluses at the beginning of the 1990s, the budget deficit as a share of gross domestic product rose to 6.4 per cent in 1993 and 5.3 per cent in 1995.

This is why the current debate about the consequences of Maastricht is so unfortunate and untimely. The Maastricht criteria for monetary union are being interpreted in debate as a recipe for deflation and sustained high levels of unemployment.

Two quite separate issues have become hopelessly caught up with each other. Fiscal stabilisation is essential in order to prevent a vicious cycle in which the servicing of public debt requires ever larger shares of current expenditure and also of national income. Only the reduction of public claims on savings will free larger sums for private sector investment.

But fiscal stabilisation is much harder in the absence of sustained growth. The attempt to cut expenditures or increase taxes necessarily provokes protest, and if the attempt is successful, growth may be further reduced.

A fiscal stabilisation agreement only makes sense in a context of an expanding resource base. This can be accomplished only by accompanying the fiscal measures by a package designed to achieve long-term growth.

An old-fashioned Keynesian-style boost for demand, as is sometimes now touted as a solution to Europe's unemployment malaise, will hardly do this trick. This is why some sort of concerted reduction of barriers to employment is needed, including a lowering of taxes and national insurance contributions.

It would be helpful to conduct this liberalisation on an international level — for instance, through the European Union — rather than leaving the debate to national governments and parliaments, which are more easily influenced and obstructed by pressure groups. This does not require an "abolition of the welfare state", but it does mean a very substantial refinement and reshaping, and in particular a reduction of the huge transfer payments now being made.

The European Union began as an institution for a greater share of government in national resources, in which states would play a major role as redistributors of income. If the EU is to survive, and not to be torn apart by increasingly vicious claims for redistribution, presented with increasingly nationalistic language, it needs to reverse its historical direction. The way that the EU will survive in the next 40 years is as a guide and a manager of liberalisation.

Britain should not just seek a new role in Europe; it should also find a new role for Europe. The challenge of globalisation requires a response that goes beyond the present muddle in both Britain and Europe.

The author is Professor of History at Princeton University. His pamphlet, *Global Opportunities: liberalising world trade and labour markets*, will be published on Monday by Polity.

Archaeologists only had to down magnifying glasses for Juppé to give in, says Ben Macintyre

France has a profound case of the blues, and the wave of gloom sweeping the country has found expression in a slew of industrial protests touching some of the most unlikely corners of the land. Last week alone saw strikes and demonstrations by transport workers, bank clerks, seamstresses and archaeologists. On Thursday the rail unions are planning another one-day stoppage. Part-time actors have taken to storming theatres around the country and last Monday the nation's astrologers, in a rare moment of unanimity, announced the setting up of a workers' federation.

On the surface the strikes and demonstrations appear to have little in common: the drivers are demanding retirement at 55; the archaeologists marched to protect an important Roman excavation site from housing developers; the employees of Crédit Foncier bank feared job losses under a government plan to break up the indebted property-lender; and the actors want to preserve the social security benefits they enjoy while "resting".

How the bourgeoisie is paralysing France

The astrologers were simply facing an uncertain future which, given their professed expertise, seemed rather strange.

But lurking behind the unrest is a generalised fear that long-established *acquis sociaux*, the perks and guarantees established under the postwar welfare state, are about to be eradicated in the cost-cutting march to monetary union.

Despite having one of the lowest rates of union membership in Europe, France is well versed in the techniques of melodramatic protest. Taking to the streets is a tradition stretching back beyond the Revolution, reflecting a culture that often lacks strong institutions of communication between governors and governed.

The rules of the ritual are well established and, in the eyes of some, bizarrely tolerated. When French lorry drivers illegally clogged up every road last November, the police stood by and the Government caved in. Still smarting from the crippling transport strikes of last winter, the Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, is plainly desperate to avoid another full-scale industrial conflagration.

Encouraged by a rattled Government and a sympathetic public, the larger unions are mobilising for another demonstration of muscle, but it is the patchwork of smaller, unpredictable and often highly eccentric protests that most closely mirrors the national malaise.

Eight days ago, hundreds of employees of the Crédit Foncier stormed into the bank's Paris headquarters and took the governor and seven officials hostage.

Jérôme Meyssonier found himself living off canteen food while, down in the atrium, his employees have been conducting what can only be described as a huge and rowdy slumber party, with singing, dancing and plenty of liquid refreshment. The demonstrators take it in turns to serve the customers.

Meyssonier did not seem to mind the indignity and only requested that the press did not photograph him asleep on the mattress provided by social services. After six days he was released, praising his employees

for their good sense. The occupation continues. Meanwhile, down in the southern city of Rodez, archaeologists donned their magnifying glasses and toothbrushes and staged a general strike, accusing M Juppé of giving permission for a construction project on top of important Gallo-Roman ruins.

A strike by archaeologists might seem about as threatening as a work stoppage by vicars, but faced by ranks of serious protesters with beards and doctorates, the Government backedpedalled fast, ordered the bulldozers to leave and agreed to give the archaeologists £70,000 to carry out excavation work.

France is quietly bubbling with a frustration that has no single explanation and many contributing causes, including rising unemployment, high taxes, political corruption and economic uncertainty in the drive to a single currency. Whether the Government can keep the promises made at Maastricht at the same time as buying its way out of industrial unrest, however, may be a question that only the Federation of Astrologers can answer.

Charmer Clark's last stand

As Kensington and Chelsea rejoices, the great Tory cavalier might reflect on his political comeback thus...

Saltwood, November: Fool. Clark, fool. This is humiliating. Newbury, Arundel, Tunbridge Wells, Devon. Nothing but misery. I feel like a 25-year-old Young Conservative, traipsing the country, feigning fascination with some grotty backwater where I wouldn't be seen dead. I simply do not care if five batty hags do or do not "want me" as their "member". Tory candidate selection is pure sadism. The Yanks are right. Have a primary and appeal over the heads of the cabalistas direct to the poles.

Last night I was treated as the alien rapist from outer Kent. I was shortlisted only so the hardians could ogle me. Then they choose some whey-faced apparition from Major's private office, forced on them by the whips with promises of lavish honours. In future I must stick to the white Commonweath: Surrey, Sussex, perhaps Kensington if poor Nick has to walk the plank. Politics is awful.

It requires one to yearn for the misfortune of others.

Simon Jenkins

Albany, Wednesday December 11: Why oh why do I do radio? Jim Naughtie came out with it direct, "Come on, Mr Clark, would you not really like to be MP for Kensington?" I hesitated, then said, "Yes, I would." I immediately regretted it. Honesty is always the worst policy. It was too *de bas en haut*. As Curzon said, you should never take a post that does you a greater honour than you do it. A constituency should be begging me to stand, yet I sounded as if I was seeking a job at Chelsea Arts Club doorman. The BBC deputed (I'm sure deliberately) a revolting haphazard bursting out of her rights to show me out of the studio, while Naughtie gloated. The whole incident lacked style. I slumped into the DBS feeling miserable. Only the sight of hopfields south of Maidstone cheered me up.

Albany, Sunday January 19: Shortlisted to last six at Kensington, which makes a change from the Neanderthals at Tunbridge and Hove. Every time I am rejected I feel low and every time I get shortlisted I feel even lower. It just means a more painful rejection. I also seriously doubt my ability to

defend this Government. Dropped by at Brooks's on Friday where everyone thinks Major is coming off his trolley. I suppose a 30-point poll deficit gets under even the toughest hide. He has induced my namesake to give the Queen a new yacht, apparently to appease the middle class. This is ridiculous. The middle classes do not care about yachts. Now Major wants to revive the school cadet corps, a typical Boy Scout idea. Nobody who ever "did corps" could possibly believe it a vote-winner. Young Portillo apparently craves a private army, presumably to attend his enthronement as Holy Roman Emperor at the Escorial.

Albany, Tuesday January 20: Extraordinary debate on the Today

show over the Kensington shortlist. Matthew Parris says that what the party needs there is "fruitcake, not some vanilla-flavoured pixie". I am told this obscure remark is defamatory, but may be

supportive in certain circles. God knows what's going on. Major has let Howard completely off the leash. Myra Hindley has been roused from obscurity to be told, via the *Daily Mail*, that she will stay in jug until she dies. Tacky, even for this bunch. The wage are saying, come election day, Howard wants to drag her from her cell, pump her full of bullets before the cameras — then demand the leadership by acclamation.

I am torn between desperately wanting to get back into the House and give the Right a moral lead, and yearning for the lot of them to be given the thrashing of their lives by that smarmy Blair.

Saltwood, Wednesday January 22: Sometimes, just sometimes, the sun shines. Down to the final four for Squiffy Scott's old seat. At least it's a constituency where one could contemplate spending a night. Come to that, I remember one or two nights in that part of town. I wonder if, horror of horrors, they might be on the selection committee. Ageing is dreadful. One day a mini-skirted secretary is walking you upstairs to bed, the next she's a Tory councillor and has your whole future by the short hairs. A man is defenceless against this sort of thing. Damn Flaubert.



I am fighting the classic trio from Conservative Central Casting: a dreary right-wing lawyer who will doubtless be chosen as "leadership potential", a statutory local councillor for whom they dare not omit, and an inevitable North-Country skit. Some ghoul from Central Office will doubtless demand to know why none of us is black. I am clearly the bit of fun on the side. Still, it's a tremendous boost to be up in lights again. Bill in the village seemed really pleased.

The repiles will do for me by endlessly repeating page 123 (earlier diary reference to his Plymouth officials as "petty, malign, chumsy conspiratorial") and picking over the character thing. I was chuffed when a prat on television asked an adorable association member what she thought of me, and she said she just wanted to "see me in the flesh". I find this strangely erotic. It is the kind of battle I admit I enjoy. Anyway it is probably Clark's Last Stand, the final thrust of the lance before Alzheimer's closes over me. I had a call in the midst of all this from William who said a heron had been worrying the mallards again. I told him to call the Home Secretary and invite him to garrote it in public.

Albany, Thursday January 23: AM: The big day. I feel like Cardigan, at Balaklava, breaking his horse from a trot to a canter and crying, "Here goes the last of Brudenells." I remember fondly how in days gone by there would be that cosseting call from Herself, a verbal pat on the knee and a slight stirring in the loins. I still dream of going through fire and water for Her. Funny stuff, adrenalin. The bowels are back in order.

I began at Saltwood with Jane at her most sweet and supportive. She did the eggs and we discussed the DBS versus the Bentley. I decided one is Chelsea, the other Kensington, but which to drive? When the two associations merged in the Seventies, relations were poisonous. Arty Chelsea types couldn't abide the Kensington toffs. I should have found out if Charles Chelsea still has any clout down there, but I imagine the King's Road *poufistes* ended his *droit de seigneur* long ago. The fact is I haven't the patience to sit in public libraries mugging up on local issues. So it will have to be Charmer Clark. Honesty Clark, Elder Statesman to the Aid of the Party Clark.

We decide on the Bentley. It is more dignified in defeat.

Saltwood, Friday January 23: What a marvellous creature the Conservative Party is. I was so nervous leaving Albany I almost winged a BMW 840 coupé in the courtyard. The loss of no-claims bonus alone would have cost me a Hispano-Suiza. Kensington Town Hall was ghastly, like a comprehensive school canteen. I spoke well (really), much better than last week when frankly I stumbled. Being 68 was probably a plus. The older members (which is most of them) treated me as a young roué, while the younger ones doubt if I can make it to the millstone. Then they can have the fun of pretending to select a prime minister again.

Congratulations poured in from Jonathan, Perry and the Brute. They said I was just what the party needed and I should not hold myself back. I am too old not to be flattered. Who knows? Palmerston, Disraeli, Asquith, Churchill were all party leaders over 70. One thing I have learnt. Compared to the sycophants and schemers in Westminster and Downing Street, politics has nothing half as sensible or decent as a local Conservative association. Those people are sheer unadulterated good judgment. We must make more use of it.

News hounds

CELEBRATIONS at Saltwood Castle. Alan Clark's castellated home in Kent, where he was cut short yesterday when one of his rottweilers saw off a BBC cameraman — leaving a tear in his trousers and blood on his leg.

Clark was with his charming wife Jane at Saltwood, basking in the glory of his election to fight for Kensington & Chelsea in place of the disgraced MP Sir Nicholas Scott. The family rottweilers Hannah (named after Hannah Reich, Hitler's test-pilot) and Leni (after Leni Riefenstahl, Hitler's film director) were locked up when journalists began to arrive.

But after the crowds had disappeared, Leni and Hannah burst excitedly from their holder and headed for the BBC team who had remained behind. Mrs Clark sprang into action, calling them. But she was too late: the playful girls had cornered the television crew and one of them jumped up and caught his leg just as she was imploring restraint.

Clark's household was said to be mortified by the incident but his detractors are already using his dogs as ammunition. "Typical of him to keep rottweilers," commented one, "large, flashy and arrogant



The Clarks, plus rottweilers

beasts." The BBC takes a sanguine line on such matters, however: "We consider over-excited dogs as one of the hazards of the job and we won't be pursuing this."

Taverna time

GREEK diplomats appear to be the first of their sort to protest against plans for a single currency. Yesterday the Greek Embassy in London went on strike against its Government's policies.

A thick Greek accent, struggling

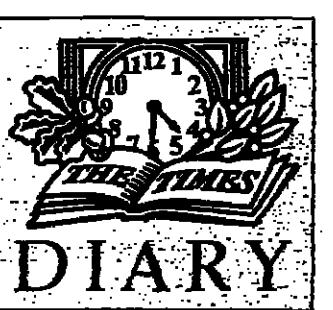
through a mouthful of dolmades, answered the telephone reluctantly at the embassy yesterday: "We also on strike on Thursday and probably also be on strike on Monday and Tuesday."

The diplomats now stand four-square with seamen, bus drivers, truck drivers and many workers in Greece, which recently suffered a nationwide strike. The protests are against stringent economic policies designed to enable Greece to join a single currency.

● The switchboard at Punch magazine has been swamped with readers disgusted at the front cover of the current issue. They object to a reference on the cover to "toilet humour". Subscriptions are being cancelled. "In the old days, Punch readers went to the lavatory, never to the toilet," trembled one former subscriber.

Self-raising

THE PRINCE of Wales's Eysoreish tendencies extend even to his culinary interests. In *The Windsor Castle Cookbook*, a charitable publication to raise money for St George's School, Windsor, he has submitted a recipe for the gloomy-sounding "Probationers Pudd" — a dry form of bread-and-butter pudding. His days at Gordonstoun, where the school corridors still



smell of boiled cabbage, must still be affecting him.

Too biblical

HAIL MARYS all round. A French family who bought a video cassette expecting it to be the Bible, found themselves watching a Spanish X-rated movie instead after deliveries got mixed up.

Larousse publishers, known for its dictionaries and encyclopedias, said children in the village of Lezignan-Corbières, in southern France, realised something was wrong only after starting the tape, a film entitled *El corredor del hombre* (Man's Passage).

"We'd entrusted the copying of our cassettes to an editor who mistakenly supplied us with the remainder of a stock of erotic tapes which had not yet been labelled," said the company. "We are going to

withdraw all the tapes from sale in the region immediately and we will replace them with models which have been checked by us," the company added.

Glitched

FOR A billionaire financier spending untold amounts on a referendum campaign, a few thousand pounds here or there would appear a mere trifle. But Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party is being sued over unpaid invoices in Scotland.

A Scottish computer company, Somervail Computer Services



"I'll be enormously disappointed if Clark does behave"

(SCS), which supplied databases to the Referendum Party to keep track of its electorate, claims it is owed a considerable amount — some £80,000. The case appears on Monday in the Scottish commercial court before Lord Penrose. "We're as confident as we can be," says a company spokesman, "but we're a small operation taking on the best lawyers' money can buy." Goldsmith's clan are defending the action on the grounds that the work was not up to scratch.

Faint-hearted

MY BEST wishes go to Sir Michael Butler, formerly our man in Brussels. At last week's meeting of the Victoria and Albert Museum trustees, which he was chairing at the branch Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood, he suddenly slumped.

As he was being lifted on to a stretcher the Blairite Sir Michael managed to croak "Not NHS!" The ambulancemen duly left, so the museum's curator loaded the ailing diplomat into his car and raced to Harley Street. Happily, Sir Michael has made a full recovery.

Alley cat

THERE'S little danger of stardom going to the head of Baroness Issy Van Randwyck, whose latest show



Issy: in the cold

opened in the West End with the all-girl cabaret act *Fascinating Aida* on Thursday night.

In the show's finale, the girls run into the auditorium, their sequinned ballgowns billowing behind them; they cluster up the steps and out through the foyer. Then, in their frenzy, they have to get back to their dressing rooms — and the only route is down a dark, bin-filled alley littered with detritus and the old tramp. As a direct descendant of William of Orange, Issy is accustomed to red-carpet treatment. "Now that I'm in the West End, I thought I wouldn't have to do draughty corridors," she pouts.



THE BENEFITS BATTLE

Blair treads confidently in Lilley's footsteps

The Left has long believed that the answer to poverty is higher benefits. At the last election, Labour's flagship policy was to increase child benefit and pensions. Yesterday Tony Blair reiterated his new Labour position that "the best form of welfare for people of working age is work". As he awaits the electorate's praise for a sinner repented, there is a prospect now that, whoever wins the election, the next government will tackle poverty by pulling people out of dependency, not throwing extra pounds at them.

Peter Lilley, the current Social Security Secretary, has been trying to do just this for five years. Step by step, he has reformed the benefit system so that it contains fewer disincentives to take a job. Through family credit, which sustains families on low wages, to childcare allowances, which permit parents to spend some of their earnings on childcare before their benefit is withdrawn, Mr Lilley's reforms have helped unemployment to fall much faster after this last recession than it did in the 1980s.

But much more change is needed. One of the questions for voters this year will be which party is more likely to deliver it. Mr Blair claims that, like Nixon visiting China, only the party that built the welfare state will be trusted to reform it. It is certainly easier for him than for John Redwood to address the problem of single parents without being accused of scapegoating. The Tory style is better suited to attacking unpopular targets, such as trade unions, Argentines or Brussels bureaucrats. Labour is better trusted to deal with "cuddly" groups, such as nurses or single parents.

Yet Labour has pressures on it too. The full costs of the policy are not yet clear. The poverty lobby has vocal supporters in the

Labour Party, and not all its members are signed up to new Labour's "welfare-to-work" model. Mr Blair will be relying heavily on support from voluntary organisations who went through their own transformations in the 1980s and are now more hard-headed in their approach.

Many of Labour's welfare reforms have already been tested in Australia. Chief among these is the proposal to encourage more lone mothers back to work, outlined yesterday in Mr Blair's speech. British lone parents are entitled to benefit, with few questions asked, until their youngest child reaches 16. This is in stark contrast to most other European countries. The result is that only 41 per cent of lone mothers in Britain work, compared with 82 per cent in France and 70 per cent in Sweden.

Labour could, eventually, compel them to take up opportunities for work or training, as it intends to do for the young unemployed. That might be the best way of cutting the spiralling costs to the State of lone parenthood; and of deterring young women from embarking on such a state-financed career.

From April, Mr Lilley will be piloting his Parent Plus programme, which will use private employment agencies to help lone parents back to work. The Tories, like Labour, have recognised the importance of after-school and holiday clubs to look after children while their mothers are working. But, nationwide, there are only 72,000 such places for the 1.3 million children of lone parents on benefit. There is much more to be done. Around 90 per cent of lone mothers claim that they would work if they could. It is hard for them to complain of being victimised if they are offered a reasonable chance to do so.

ISLAM'S THREAT

The agonies of Algeria send warnings to the north

At a farm on the outskirts of Algiers this week 15 members of one family, including ten women, were hacked to death. In a village south of Algiers, guerrillas murdered a boy and his father on their way to school. These were just the latest of more than 500 students and teachers to die at the hands of Algeria's ferocious Armed Islamic Group (GIA) since 1994, when it warned students to boycott schools because their studies hampered its "holy war" against the Government.

The killing campaign is now confined to those seeking education. In a gas-rich town, a bomb blast in a market killed eight and wounded ten; in one small hamlet alone, two explosions within four days killed many more. Within the space of this past week, at least five bombs have plunged Algeria into despair and fear; 17 more have been defused. It is the poor and defenceless who are being deliberately singled out in the latest surge of homicidal attacks by the GIA guerrillas. Their assault on the peaceable traditions of Ramadan, the Muslim holy month of fasting, seems almost designed to prove the questionable thesis of Samuel Huntington, the American academic who argues that Islamic society is inherently violent and intolerant.

For the mass of Algerians who believe nothing of the kind, and who voted last November for a new constitution in the hope that elections would heal the nation's agony, this escalation of a civil war that has claimed at least 60,000 lives is a deception beyond bitterness. For Algeria's near neighbours, including Morocco which has just launched a crackdown on extremist Islam in the universities, the fear of contagion is a penetrating anxiety.

In France, even though the overwhelming majority of its large Maghrebian population are law-abiding French citizens, a massive police operation is required to limit the

vulnerability of its urban centres to a few terrorist cells. Yet much of Western Europe has yet to take seriously the notion that Europe's southern frontier may need as much attention as its east. The very nature of the doctrines espoused by Islam's radical underworld makes it difficult to see what the non-Muslim world can do.

Insofar as poverty and unemployment breed extremism — which is true to differing degrees in Algeria, Egypt and Morocco — closer economic co-operation between the European Union and North Africa is obviously desirable. But that does not deal with the concentration of too much of these countries' wealth in too few hands. Islamist extremism is the latest throw of the political dice after the failed experiments of Nasserist pan-Arabism and Baathist socialism. But there is understandable nervousness about lecturing the region's rulers on free speech and democracy when they are confronted by a primitive, dynamic Islam which denounces the idea of rendering any power unto Caesar as a blasphemous and alien imposition of infidel culture.

Algeria's President Zeroual has scorned mediation so far. But that may be needed if he is to bring in from the political cold such important Algerian minorities as the Berbers, whose participation is vital if the GIA is to be neutralised. King Hassan of Morocco has manoeuvred skilfully to open up the parliamentary system and to bring one at least of the country's Islamist organisations into the political mainstream. External investment and encouragement have helped to nudge this process forward.

Europeans cannot be sure whether instability in the Maghreb will affect them directly. But what is certain is that if it did, this would be an issue greater by far than most of the business that currently absorbs the energies of EU governments.

DIRTY DANCING

Step, step, glide, glide, kick, kick: kindly leave the floor

Dancing has finally been given its disciplinary code. And not before time, to judge from the bawling, aggression and the other cold-blooded professional fouls on the floor we report today. *Dance News*, the *Widen* of the dancing world, is publishing a code of conduct drawn up by the world's glittering twinkie-toed experts. Couples who break it should be given the dance equivalent of a yellow card, and then sent off.

Sentimentalists regret the need for such a code. But it marks the final transition of ballroom dancing from a genteel courting ritual to a fiercely competitive sport at which fortunes are made. This is the last sport at which Britain still leads the world, in expertise, tuition and prize money. Competitors from all over the world have brought the manners of the football stadium and boxing ring to the dancefloor. If dancing is to be recognised as an Olympic sport, as it probably will be in June, it now has to clean up its act.

A rich casket of gold medals should then open. Britain would have won twice as many medals at the last Olympics if dancing had been included as a sport, as it was in the ancient world. When the Victorians codified sports and games for the world, *The Times* played a prominent part in their deliberations and legislation. So should it now for these newer sports.

The dress regulations of the dancers' code are fair, so far as they go. For safety as well as propriety, it is prudent to rule that competitors must stop and replace their shoes

immediately if they fall off during a dance. Otherwise a rival might try to disable them by a stab with a stiletto heel. Much worse has happened on the Olympic ice-rink. The code may need to be more radical still. It should consider whether it is sensible for its athletes to dress as head waiters, debutantes or flappers. To judge from the latest fashions in equally robust sports, something dinging in Lycra would be more efficient.

It is all very well for the code to declare that competitors must at all times dance anti-clockwise around the floor and avoid collisions. But this rule will prove impossible to enforce, with 24 couples all pushing to catch the judges' eyes. Ballroom dancing has always been the art of getting one's feet out of the way faster than one's partner can step on them. But the sport should now consider changing the shape of the dancefloor from open plan to the shape of a flat ring or torus, in order to force all competitors to proceed in order around the same circular track. The floor should have a long central barrier, with turning posts at either end, as in chariot-racing.

As with ancient charioteers, rules are evidently needed against bumping and boring, unfairly whipping the opposition with coat-tails or feathered brooks, and excess mascara in an event that is part sport, part theatre. The code will broaden and deepen over the years. The first step is the one that counts, recognising that ballroom dancing is no longer a ritual governed by etiquette. It is a sport at which who dares to dance wins.

Reply to Tories on minimum wage

From Mr Benedict Birnberg

Sir, Sir Stanley Kalms and other businessmen (letter, January 23) argue that a minimum wage would be bad for British business because it would lead to job losses. Even if this proposition is well founded, do our doubtless maximum-waged business leaders no longer regard it relevant to consider the morality or social consequences for the community of the impoverishment to which the absence of a minimum wage contributes?

Yours faithfully,
BENEDICT BIRNBERG,
4 Eliot Place, Blackheath, SE3,
January 23.

From Mr Ian McCartney,
MP for Macclesfield (Labour)

Sir, I was surprised to find John Hoerner, from Burton, Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale, from GUS, and Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover attacking the minimum wage in their letter.

In June 1996 one of Mr Hoerner's senior colleagues told Labour that the minimum wage should "provide a simple form of protection for individuals at work". In September a director of GUS, Jonathan Charkham, said of Labour, "above all the party wants to pursue practical and sensible policies", and Lord Sainsbury is at odds with his chairman, David Sainsbury, a contributor to the report by the Commission on Public Policy and British Business, which called for a minimum wage (reports and leading article, January 22).

Of the other two signatories to the letter, one, Archie Norman, of Asda, is a wannabe Tory MP; and the other, Sir Stanley Kalms, of Dixons, is a long-term Tory paymaster. Their opposition to a minimum wage must be taken with a large bag of salt.

Only they could ignore the business case for the minimum wage. This will reduce staff turnover, increase quality in goods and services, boost demand in the local economy and reduce the £3.4 billion bill for benefits to top up low pay, which is funded by taxes on business.

Under Labour the level of the national minimum wage will be recommended by a low-pay commission, on which employers, employee representatives and independents will sit. This will take full account of the economic circumstances of the time. All independent business surveys show growing support for a minimum wage. Business is rejecting the low-pay or no-pay strategy of the Tories. Stanley Kalms *et al* are increasingly isolated on this issue.

Yours sincerely,
IAN MCCARTNEY
(Labour Employment Spokesperson),
House of Commons.

From Dr R. Butler

Sir, Given the enormous amounts of money paid to the likes of Mrs Horlick and Chris Evans, is there not a case for introducing a national maximum wage?

Yours sincerely,
R. BUTLER,
Brackenholm, Methven Road,
Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria.

Working hours

From the Shadow Environment Minister

Sir, It is worrying that because of politically motivated attacks by the Conservatives, the working-time directive is so misunderstood. Any small business's fear of a 48-hour week is misplaced since, as you reported (*Business*, January 17), nearly every employee who works over 48 hours a week does so voluntarily. These workers will still be able to work extra hours under the new provisions.

It is employees who are forced to work long hours by the minority of cowboy and irresponsible employers, causing stress and risking accidents, who will be protected in future. We will strongly support the CBI and the majority of responsible employers in their desire to reduce the massive costs of poor health and safety practice in the UK.

The 67 per cent of small businesses who are said to oppose the directive on the ground that working hours should be decided between employer and worker need have no fear, since this is integral to the new measures.

Yours sincerely,
GRAHAM ALLEN,
Room 506, 7 Millbank, SW1,
January 21.

Whoever you are

From Dr Robert Barnard

Sir, I received this morning an appeal for funds from Dr Brian Mawhinney. It was addressed to:

Mr R. Philo Bergen Proles and it began:

Dear Mr Proles
It seems the Conservative Party are conducting their appeal for funds with the same dazzling efficiency with which they are governing the country.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT BARNARD
(Dr Philo Bergen), former
Professor of English,
Hazeldean,
Houghley Lane,
Leeds, West Yorkshire.
January 23.

Benign origins of the Green Man

From Mr John Hunter

Sir, In his luxurious tribute (*January 18*) to the Green Man — the mysterious human face engulfed in foliage commonly found in medieval art and sculpture — Simon Jenkins posits a number of awesome spirit connections and manifestations that are pure fantasy.

I have found not a jot of evidence to link the Green Man with the Druids, wicker giants, the maypole, Puck, Jack-in-the-Box, or any other guise that Jenkins suggests, other than coffee-table books and New Age musings on television. That is not evidence.

Some twenty years ago Kathleen Basford, whose latest book gives rise to Jenkins's article, authoritatively showed the Green Man's origins in Roman art of the 1st century AD, his marvellous development in the Middle Ages, and his rapid fading away at the Reformation and Renaissance. Jack-in-the-Box, associated with May Day, ales, pub signs and chimney sweeps, appears much later and is a secular not sacred figure. The pedigree of the "wild man of pagant and heraldry" is well known and is not related to the Green Man.

I admire the Green Man as much as Simon Jenkins and feel it a disservice to cloak this wonderful figure with fantasies and fictions. He does not need them.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN HUNTER,
The Market Cross,
Thaxted, Essex,
January 18.

Military cadet force plan for schools

From the Chief Executive of the National Youth Agency

Sir, Plans to spend millions expanding the military cadet force (reports, January 23) show a rather odd choice of priorities. At £65 million government support for the cadet force is already 20 times its help to the rest of the voluntary youth service put together.

What about some more support to the Scouts, Guides, and Woodcraft Folk? What about a boost to the thousands of voluntary youth clubs building self-esteem and providing new experiences for young people who, like the young Major and Porlino, are not attracted to the military?

Young people, especially the most vulnerable, need a variety of opportunities and too many of these have been cut back in recent years.

Yours etc,
TOM WYLIE,
Chief Executive,
National Youth Agency,
17-23 Albion Street, Leicester,
January 23.

From Brigadier R. C. Wollerson

Sir, I am sorry that you chose to illustrate today's report on page 1 about the Government's plans to extend the military cadet organisation with a 40-year-old picture. Things change — not least the front page of *The Times*, which once had only announcements and notices.

Your amusing photograph may have given the impression that army cadets are a mixture of Dad's Army and Greysfriars School. Nothing is further from the truth of today's cadets, boys — and girls nowadays. A sense of

Fact and fiction

From Mr John Elder

Sir, The assumption by Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools (report, January 22), that young viewers are incapable of discriminating between fictional TV comedy characters such as Del Boy and Rodney (who, incidentally almost always get things wrong) and role models does them a disservice.

Similarly, Waterstone's customers and Channel 4 viewers may not have felt that they were being asked to vote objectively for *The Lord of the Rings* as "the greatest work of English literature this century" (as lamented by Mr Woodhead) but, in the absence of any other criteria, subjectively for the books which made the greatest impact on them personally — not necessarily the same thing.

Yours faithfully,
J. ELDER,
31 Thornbury Avenue,
Southampton, Hampshire,
January 23.

SAS ban

From Brigadier J. F. Rickert

Sir, According to your report today, General Sir Peter de la Billière had to telephone the MoD to find out that he is no longer welcome at SAS regimental functions. What an unbelievable means of informing anyone in the first place and what a disgraceful way to treat the most decorated, successful and popular general that the British Army has had since the Second World War.

MoD policy seems to have vacillated from one extreme to another: clearing his books for publication in the first place (there were in any case no secrets which would endanger the realm in them) and then pillorying the author three years after the event. Small wonder that standards and

From Mr Malcolm Brocklesby

Sir, Not all Green Men are portrayed in the bizarre act of disgorging foliage from their heads. Many are, but some simply peer out from leaves and branches, as at Southwell Minster, in Nottinghamshire some, like the formidable Green Man at Bamberg, in Bavaria, wear foliate masks, while in other cases the face is an integral part of a carved leaf.

Some are indeed grotesque or menacing, but the majority appear benign and frequently seem worried. Were these carvings "green" reminders that have been watching us over the ages, with their troubled expressions, trying to warn us of the dangers we were incurring? If so, we should heed them, not disparage them.

Mr Jenkins concludes on a sour note, predicting that, with the collapse of civilisation, the trees will reclaim the British Isles and the Green Man will have the last grimace. But his sensitive article on trees last year (October 24) finished in a much more positive vein, looking forward to majestic regeneration of our woodlands. Guarding a great tree, he wrote, "is a gesture of fury, the nearest thing we get to touching eternity. There is no optimism to match that of the true woodman".

Perhaps there is more of the Green Man in Simon Jenkins than he cares to admit?

Yours faithfully,
MALCOLM BROCKLESBY,
Croft House, Calverley Road,
Oulton, Leeds, West Yorkshire,
January 19.

individual responsibility, the value of teamwork and good citizenship are developed by undertaking challenging activities and by contributing to local communities.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER WOLVERSON,
Rock House, Halse, Somerset,
January 23.

From Mr Adrian R. D. Norman

Sir, Young people could get most of the benefits of CCF training without learning to use weapons if they could opt for a modern "civil defence" section. This would require them to be as disciplined, fit and loyal as their military counterparts and offer as much opportunity for adventure and comradeship. Their models would include, for example, HM Coastguard, the police, the emergency services, St John Ambulance and mountain rescue teams.

Yours faithfully,
ADRIAN R. D. NORMAN,
North Wing,
Crowcombe Court,
Crowcombe, Taunton, Somerset,
January 23.

From Mr Alan Blyth

Sir, Surely the cause of better upbringing would be much better served by providing proper funding for children's musical education (now starved of money) rather than the guns the Prime Minister is proposing?

Yours faithfully,
ALAN BLYTH,
22 Shilling Street, Lavenham, Suffolk,
January 23.

From Mr Nick Beeson

Sir, Unlike Mr Woodhead, I am delighted that *The Lord of the Rings* has been chosen as the nation's favourite book. A "favourite" is surely the warm familiar object to which you return time and again — not necessarily the best, but the most comfortable.

I frequently return to Tolkien after clambering through the intellectual peaks. Besides, Tolkien's work is a splendid starting point to explore other literature: Homer, Virgil, Dante, Chaucer would all be less daunting to a first-time reader who had read Tolkien.

I would never claim that Tolkien wrote great literature. However, Mr Woodhead should be grateful that the nation did not choose one of the many "blockbusters" of the bestseller list which provide an introduction to nothing.

Yours faithfully,
NICK BEESON,
5 Alexandra Place,
Ilkley, West Yorkshire,
January 22.

morals continue to decline in this country.

It is just as well, given the Prime Minister's initiative on youth joining the cadets, that General Sir Peter de la Billière is President of the Army Cadet Force.

Yours faithfully,
J. F. RICKETT
(Comptroller),
The Union Jack Club,
Sandell Street, Waterloo, SE1,
January 23.

Weekend Money letters, page 49

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

Millennial plan to 'finish' cathedral

From Mr Nicholas Ray

Sir, Your article on the application to the Millennium Commission by St Edmundsbury Cathedral in Suffolk (January 20) suggests that the highest aspiration for the design of the new tower is that it should be virtually indistinguishable from the ancient work, on the analogy of Stephen Dykes Bower's *haldachino* at the east end of St Paul's. This is to oversimplify an architectural issue.

Some of the very best and most moving Gothic buildings in this country, such as Pearson's Truro Cathedral, were created in the 19th century by architects with a deep knowledge of the style they were working in and a passionate conviction in what they were doing. There is certainly no spirit of the age which authenticates a single style for today; opportunistic pastiche is always disastrous, but authentic architecture can be made in a revivalist style when the architect has both the skill and conviction to do it.

Dykes Bower's own chancel additions at Bury St Edmunds are excellent, but not because they are indistinguishable from earlier work. At a seminar at Bury St Edmunds on September 25, 1996, attended by 100 people from many disciplines, the tower proposal, designed by Dykes Bower and assembled by A. M. Rome, which is now before the Millennium Commission, was welcomed as a design with the capability of matching the highest standards of Gothic revivalist architecture.

As the Provost points out, this noble tower would have a greater chance than most Millennium-funded projects of being welcomed, in due course, into the third millennium.

Yours sincerely,
NICHOLAS RAY,
University of Cambridge,
Department of Architecture,
1 Scrope Terrace, Cambridge,
January 21.

From the Reverend P. L. S. Barrett

Sir, St Edmundsbury is a flourishing cathedral. Its completion would be an excellent way of celebrating the millennium.

But I cannot agree with the comment by one of the parishioners that "cathedral building is dying in our country". Fine new cathedrals have been built during this century at Liverpool, Guildford and Coventry. Portsmouth Cathedral has been completed as recently as 1991. At several cathedrals, including St Albans, Chelmsford, Southwark, Winchester and Hereford — and, indeed, St Edmundsbury — splendid new ancillary buildings have been erected. More are being planned.

The last 30 years have seen English cathedrals burgeoning with astonishing new life. This was endorsed by the Howe Commission in its report *Heritage and Renewal* (1994). They are ready to enter the new millennium with hope and confidence.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP BARRETT,
The Rectory,
Kiln Lane, Otterbourne,
Winchester, Hampshire,
January 20.

From the Provost of Sheffield

Sir, I am sure the Millennium Commission should support the completion of St Edmundsbury Cathedral and I wish my colleague James Atwell, the Provost, every success with his application.

However, St Edmundsbury is not England's "only incomplete cathedral" as you said in your report. Sheffield parish church was also elevated to cathedral status earlier this century, and an ambitious scheme to turn the medieval building round by 90° and vastly enlarge it was initiated by Sir Charles Nicholson. He finished what would have been the new high sanctuary, lady chapel, chapter house and vestries, but construction of the nave was due to begin on the day after the Second World War was declared.

After the war, funds were insufficient and it was never built. A modest extension was added in the 1960s instead. The result is an intriguing if en-dearing building that faces both ways. The word "unfinished" is written all over it, but perhaps there is an important theological point in that.

Where the great nave door would have been, the Sheffield Superram now collects passengers from the cathedral stop.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL SAGGROVE,
The Cathedral Church of St Peter and St Paul,
Sheffield, South Yorkshire,
January 20.

Towering cheek?

From Sir Clive Sinclair

Sir, Thank heaven English Heritage, which opposes the proposed Millennium Tower in the City on the ground that it is "macho fashion" (report, January 23), was not around when the cathedrals such as Ely were in the planning stage.

Tall buildings "inspired" then and do now. Let them be built.

Who gave these miserable people any right to interfere?

Yours faithfully,
CLIVE SINCLAIR (Chairman),
Sinclair Research Ltd,
7 York Centre, 70 York Way, NI,
January 23.

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

SATURDAY JANUARY 25 1997

Downgraded profit forecast wipes 13 per cent off share price

Sainsbury issues warning

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

SHARES of J. Sainsbury plunged 13 per cent yesterday after the supermarket group gave a shock warning that its efforts to build sales and catch up with Tesco will mean profits this year will be below even the most pessimistic City forecasts.

At one stage, nearly £1 billion was wiped off the group's stock market value and the Sainsbury family ended the day with its stake worth some £375 million less. The shares closed 51p down at 341p.

The warning adds another large dent to the already

battered reputation of Sainsbury's, formerly Britain's largest supermarket chain. "It is an appalling statement. Management credibility is at an all-time low," one analyst said. Sainsbury said pre-tax profit in the year to March was likely to be £640 million to £650 million. Most forecasts were for about £700 million to £710 million. NatWest Markets lowered its forecast from £708 million to £648 million for 1996-97 and from £704 million to £704 million for the next year.

Last May, Sainsbury announced its first fall in profits for 22 years — £712 million

before tax against £809 million a year earlier. The shortfall of £60 million on the profits expected this year has been blamed almost entirely on costs being higher than predicted. The company also announced an extra £50 million provision to convert Sainsbury's stores to the Homebase format. David Sainsbury, chairman, said £10 million would come off profits because of extra costs for the Reward loyalty card, which was launched in May, more than a year after Tesco's successful Club card. A further £5 million will come off profits because of stock losses and

£5 million because the group expected stores to be busier in early December and brought in extra staff in anticipation of a rush. But stores only became very busy in the last few days before Christmas. Poor sales at former Texas stores and the closure of some kitchens sales areas within the stores will knock £10 million off profits. The cost of setting up its bank takes off £4 million more. The company still expects to launch the bank in the next few weeks. The final extra costs emerged in the US supermarket business. Mr Sainsbury played down the long-term impact of the

profit warning. He said: "They are mostly non-recurring items. We now need to get sales momentum translated into profit growth." He said the group's store opening programme would not be affected, and that no shop closures or redundancies were expected. He did say that, because investment levels were higher than expected, supermarket net margins had fallen. "We will look hard at all capital expenditure," he said. "We will take a tough view on whether any new spending is essential." He emphasised that sales at Sainsbury's supermarkets had picked up in

recent weeks and were better than some had expected. In the eight-week Christmas trading period, same store sales were up 4.4 per cent. This is close to the sector average, but still well behind Tesco which earlier this week reported same store sales up 7.5 per cent over Christmas. Tony MacNeary, analyst with NatWest Markets, said he had lowered next year's forecast sharply because Sainsbury's sales growth is not covering the cost of the Reward card. "It needs 5 per cent like-for-like growth to cover the costs and it is not getting it," he said.

Conditions on FirstBus deal suggest clampdown

BY OLIVER AUGUST

THE large bus companies that have grown rapidly by acquisition could be facing a tighter regulatory environment after the Department of Trade and Industry yesterday imposed tough conditions on the latest deal by FirstBus.

The DTI has decided to force FirstBus to sell some parts of SB Holdings, the Scottish bus company that it has bought for £96 million. The department followed the advice of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission which ruled that FirstBus's purchase of SB Holdings was not in the public interest.

The move prompted a warning from Brian Souter, chairman of Stagecoach, regarded as the most aggressive of the bus companies, that the industry could face a tougher regime in future.

He said: "Once Labour is in place and we know their policies, then we can move. But for now we have a sabbatical on acquisitions in this area because of high

prices and until we see what happens with the next government." FirstBus will be forced to sell one of the four bus depots that it controls in Glasgow, as well as its Midland Bluebird operation. The large depot has both garaging and maintenance facilities supporting more than 120 buses. The DTI said: "FirstBus should identify a firm buyer within nine months of the publication of the MMC's report."

The MMC report, which was published yesterday, said that if FirstBus failed to identify a firm buyer "it should be required to divest SBH in its entirety."

The DTI agreed with the MMC that the acquisition had eliminated competition between FirstBus and SBH and that the scale and dominance of the merged entity in central and south east Scotland was likely to deter competition from other operators.

FirstBus has become by far the largest operator in the region. SBH supplied 40 per cent of the bus services in the region. FirstBus already controlled a further 21 per cent.

FirstBus bought SBH last year when Stagecoach was forced to sell a 21 per cent stake, which it had bought in 1994, after pressure from the MMC over competition.

Rather than acquiring more UK bus companies, the larger operators could turn their attention to foreign purchase targets. Mr Souter said this may be the best way of continuing Stagecoach's strong growth.

He said that his European ambitions had been ignited by the Stagecoach acquisition in Sweden last year. Stagecoach was looking to make further acquisitions in Scandinavia, he said.

"I also think there'll be overseas railways opportunities," he said. "These two will provide the biggest lump of growth in future. That's my prediction."



David Daynes, chief executive of Anglo-Welsh Group, is raising £2.2 million for Britain's largest canal boat firm by joining the Alternative Investment Market.

Horlick legal talks commence

BY JON ASHWORTH

LAWYERS acting for Nicola Horlick and Morgan Grenfell met yesterday in the opening exchange of what threatens to be a protracted legal battle. The discussions were preliminary, and it is likely to be some weeks until specific demands are made. Mrs Horlick was suspended from her £1 million job at Morgan Grenfell ten days ago, amid allegations that she was inciting staff to defect with her to ABN Amro, the Dutch bank. She subsequently resigned, claiming constructive dismissal. Morgan Grenfell says she was in breach of her contract, and is not entitled to compensation.

Herbert Smith, the law firm acting for Mrs Horlick, is expected to press for substantial compensation. Morgan Grenfell is represented by Fox Williams, the City law firm known for its expertise in executive compensation. The firm has assigned a team to the case, led by Ronnie Fox, the senior partner.

NSM goes into administration with £140m debts

BY JASON NISSÉ

NSM, the coalmine, was placed in administration late yesterday with debts of more than £140 million. It follows Coal Investments into the hands of the accountants, leaving RJB Mining and Rackwood as the UK's only quoted private coal companies. NSM's shares were suspended at 8p just before Christmas while it attempted to finalise the sale of its Clee Hill plant hire side to pay off some of its debts. Less than two years ago the shares stood at more than 200p.

Arthur Andersen, which cut its teeth in the sector as receivers of Coal Investments, took control yesterday. The firm is expected to sell Clee Hill and the US mining interests in the next few weeks. A shareholders' meeting had approved the sale of Clee Hill but the deal could not be completed in time to save NSM. The company, which unsuccessfully bid for the South

Wales part of British Coal two years ago, was forced to declare losses of £75 million in December after admitting problems in the US. John Jermaine, NSM's chairman, blamed the problems on unforeseen circumstances — two "once-in-100-years" storms happening in successive years. Mr Jermaine said he believed that the group's businesses in South Wales would be a strong operation that should come to its peak during this year. The business has more than 80 million tonnes of licensed coal reserves at the Penrethwydau mine. RJB's shares have been hit by the uncertainty at NSM, which recently obtained permission to buy back 5 per cent of its shares. Barclays de Zoete Wedd, RJB's brokers, downgraded its profits forecast last month. It warned that the price of coal being sold by RJB might be hit by cheap imports coming into the UK.

Societies review sales practices

BY MARIANNE CURPHEY

BUILDING societies have begun reappraising their promotional literature after a small investor who was paid uncompetitive rates of interest successfully sued his society in a county court.

Full details of the judgment made in Norwich county court are being circulated among society executives this weekend. Adrian Coles, Director-General of the Building Societies Association, said the impact of the judgment would depend on claims made in marketing literature used by societies and banks at the bottom of the savings league table.

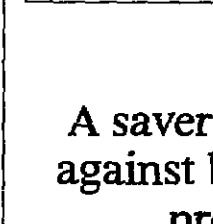
Robert Anthony sued the Norwich and Peterborough building society after it claimed it would pay "a very competitive rate of interest" on his Tessa but then reduced the rate to below that of many rival societies.

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STOCK MARKET INDEXES		
FTSE 100	4218.8	(-52.7)
FTSE All share	2066.82	(-20.48)
Nikkei	17699.36	(-220.10)
Dow Jones	6721.50	(-34.25)
S&P Composite	774.09	(-5.47)
ASIA		
Hong Kong	8542.4	(-100.0)
Shanghai	947.24	(-10.0)
Yen	119.08	(-1.18)
S&P 500	101.0	(-1.0)
STERLING		
3-month Interbank	5.4%	(P+0.4)
Libor long gilt	110%	(111%)
Future (Mar)	110%	(111%)
NEW YORK		
Dollar	1.6285	(1.6300)
London	1.6285	(1.6279)
DM	2.8483	(2.8511)
FF	2.2875	(2.2888)
SFR	193.80	(194.59)
Yen	95.3	(95.8)
COMMODITIES		
Oil	1.4010	(1.4024)
Gold	340.70	(340.75)
Silver	119.08	(119.23)
Yen	101.0	(101.5)
S Index	101.0	(101.5)
Tokyo close Yen	119.33	
NORTH SEA OIL		
15-day (Apr)	\$22.00	(\$22.00)
Gold		
London close	\$353.25	(\$348.45)

* denotes midday trading price

Blunders blight Halifax payout

BY CAROLINE MERRELL

THOUSANDS of members of the Halifax are being excluded from the flotation bonus because of massive computer blunders. Among those most affected are former Leeds Permanent Building Society savers and borrowers.

At least 100,000 former Leeds savers were given wrong information about the money in their accounts when the society was taken over by the Halifax in 1994. Some savers were told they had enough money in their accounts to qualify for the shares when in fact they did not, while others were told they did not qualify, when they did.

Many of this latter group of former Leeds savers may have closed their accounts or depleted them even further, thus excluding themselves entirely from the payout.

Another group of Leeds savers who may find their shares could be in jeopardy are those who were forced to move savings out of Leeds accounts into comparable Halifax accounts after the takeover, assured by the Halifax that they would continue to qualify for the bonus. But the computer has disqualified members if there is any difference in the details on the two accounts.

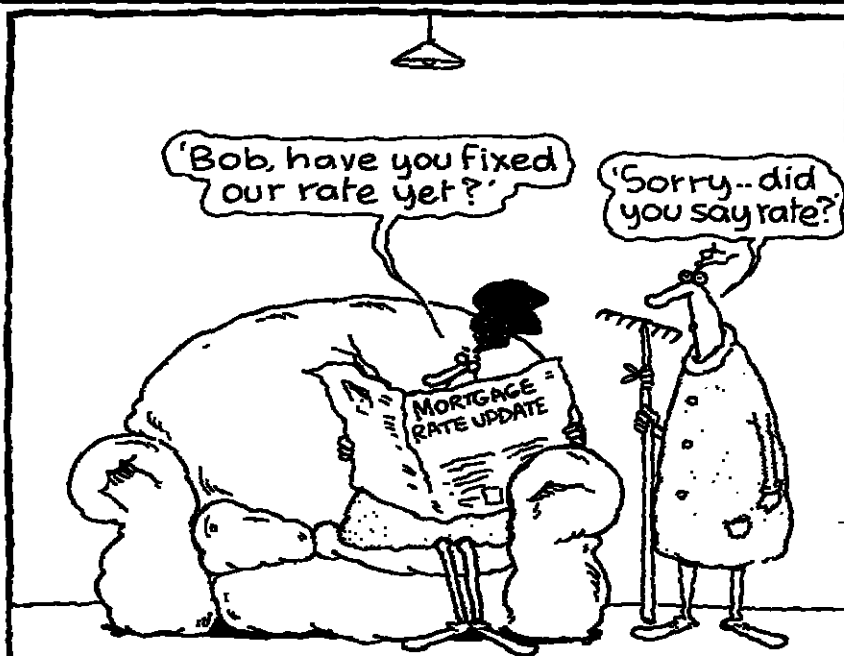
Among those affected are Geoffrey Maitland, Smith, former chairman of

Sears and now chairman of Hammerson, the property company, who had £9,000 in a Save as You Earn scheme with the Leeds.

After it was taken over, he was encouraged to switch to one of Halifax's Gold accounts, then was surprised to learn last year that he was not eligible for the shares.

Mr Maitland Smith has been unable to get a reply from the Halifax about his predicament. After The Times contacted the Halifax, it agreed that there had been an error. It refused to say how many people had been affected or whether it would pay compensation.

Bank of Ireland Mortgages



Don't wait to fix your mortgage

6.79%
fixed until March 2000
7.0% APR

The trend towards increased interest rates, together with a General Election fast approaching, means it could make sense to fix your mortgage now.

With a fixed rate mortgage from Bank of Ireland you can enjoy lasting long term value. Our rate of 6.79% (APR 7.0%) is fixed until March 2000, so you can budget ahead with confidence. Moreover, at Bank of Ireland we do not insist that you use our life, endowment or home insurance policies as a condition of the loan.

And as all the arrangements can be made by phone and post, we can offer you a genuinely convenient service as well as an excellent choice of mortgages. For more details, call one of our friendly consultants today or contact your financial adviser.

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Bank of Ireland Mortgages

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT. ST2601E

Unilever's Mexican venture

Unilever is making its first move into the Mexican ice cream market through a joint venture with Helados Helanda, the leading local ice cream business. It has also acquired the rights to Iberia, a leading Mexican ice cream brand, from Prolesa. Unilever has also agreed a distribution deal with Prolesa for its existing Anderson Clayton food business in Mexico.

Grid options

David Jones, chief executive of the National Grid, was more than £250,000 richer yesterday after cashing in share options for nearly 400,000 shares at 135p a share.

BZW deal

Bank of Scotland has hired BZW Securities as joint stockbroker to work alongside its existing broker, Cazenove & Co.

Dunn sale

UK SAFETY, the Bristol manufacturer of protective work clothing, has bought the corporate clothing division of Dunn & Co for £315,000 through a share placement.

B&B change

Geoffrey Lister, vice-chairman and former chief executive of the Bradford & Bingley Building Society, has retired at 60. Christopher Rodrigues has taken over.

Rank change

Mike Lavington, Rank's group personnel director, has taken over as acting managing director of the leisure group's holidays division.

Seton brand

Seton Healthcare has bought a sleeping aid called Somnux from SmithKline Beecham for £800,000.



Sebastian Coe, the MP and former Olympic runner, is encouraging British companies to take part in the Mittel Challengers Trophy 97, which tests teamwork, communication and leadership skills over four days of sporting competition in July. It also raises money for the Royal National Institute for the Blind. He is pictured with Alan Kirkham, Mittel's managing director.

Labour pressed to delay power market if elected

By Christine Buckley, Industrial Correspondent

LABOUR is facing growing pressure to postpone the ambitious scheme to enable household consumers to shop around for electricity.

As the election approaches, fears are growing that the programme is about to fall into chaos. It is thought that Labour has been urged, if it wins the election, to slow the introduction of competition. The present aim is that more than 20 million homes should be able to buy electricity competitively by 1998.

Calls for a wholesale revision of the project are now coming from independent energy experts, along with a massive lobby from the companies that must implement the mechanics of the system.

Fresh fears have been fuelled by increased evidence that the complicated computer networks and other necessary operations are foundering.

At Yorkshire Electricity, which has given public warnings of the social costs of the world's first attempt to deliver competition to the household market, two key staff suddenly left the company recently after playing important roles in the 1998 project. Brian Morgan, a director, retired on health grounds, while John Heath, director of regulation, took redundancy.

Last year, Hyder, the Welsh multi-utility, pulled out of a new IBM scheme to deliver competition run in conjunction with Web, the South Western electricity company. Web is reviewing its position but said that the system will not be running by 1998.

Dieter Helm, the Oxford energy adviser, said a Labour government should launch a reevaluation of the project "the day after the election". Both the programmes to bring in electricity and gas competition had been poorly managed and needed effective trials, and the 1998 programme cannot be delivered as it is now envisaged, Dr Helm said.

John Battle, the Shadow Energy spokesman, rejected industry speculation that Labour was considering plans to delay competition if it wins the election. But he gave warning that the programme must work efficiently. "The worst of all worlds would be for people not to get their bills and then, surprise, surprise, a Tory opposition would turn round and blame us," he said.

The gas trials in the South West, where 500,000 customers can buy gas competitively, have been plagued by billing problems. Similarly, British Gas has blamed preparation for competition for huge errors in its customer billing.

Sony seeks tie-up with News Corp in JSkyB

FROM ROBERT WHYMANT IN TOKYO

SONY Corporation said yesterday that it wanted to become a full partner in JSkyB, which will launch multi-channel digital television in Japan this year.

JSkyB was established last December as a joint venture between The News Corporation, parent company of The Times, and Softbank, the Japanese computer software distributor and publisher. The joint venture will launch about 12 channels this autumn, and a further 150 channels in April next year.

Sony officials said that Nobuyuki Idei, the company's president, had held talks with Rupert Murdoch, chairman and chief executive of News Corp, but an agreement had not been reached yet. According to Sony, its proposal to become an equal shareholder had met with "some dissenting voices in JSkyB".

A Sony official said: "We would like to participate in the JSkyB project by taking a position that would give us a say (in the running), rather than merely putting up some capital." Sony is a leading manufacturer of digital studio cameras and equipment, as well as the top maker of equipment for uplinking broadcast signals to satellites.

On Thursday, Mr Idei announced that this year Sony Corp, Sony Music Entertainment Inc and Sony Pictures Entertainment of America will form a company combining operations related to digital satellite television broadcasting. The operations would include the manufacture of set-top boxes for decoding satellite TV signals, as well as some of Sony's "content" businesses such as film and TV production.

The growth potential for the digital satellite broadcasting business is extremely big, Mr Idei told the news conference held to unveil Sony's plans for 1997.

United in deal with Discovery channel

UNITED NEWS & MEDIA, the newspaper and TV company formed last year by the merger of United and MAI, announced yesterday that it has agreed to supply Discovery Communications of America with its library of Survival natural history programmes. United said the deal is worth \$55 million over seven years, starting later this year.

Discovery, which is controlled by Tele-Communications, the largest cable company in the US, acquired the cable and satellite rights to 180 hours of Survival programming, plus the rights to the entire back catalogue, covering 400 hours, for the Latin American market and most of the European market.

The programmes will be shown on Discovery's Animal Planet channels. The deal will not interfere with ITV's right to broadcast new Survival programmes in Britain. Only the older programmes, whose terrestrial rights have expired, will be shown exclusively by Discovery.

BAT in US sell-off

BAT, the tobacco and insurance company, revealed that Farmers, its American insurance subsidiary, has agreed to sell its Columbus-based Ohio State Life Insurance and Investors Guaranty Life Insurance companies to Great Southern Life Insurance Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of America Life, for about \$330 million in cash. The deal is subject to regulatory approval but is not expected to have a material impact on the trading profit of Farmers.

Marshalls shares fall

SHARES in Marshalls fell by 34p to 126½p yesterday when the paving stone company warned that this year's profits will be "materially lower" than current market forecasts. It said trading conditions in the UK concrete and stone markets had remained weak in the second half, and profits margins had come under pressure. Marshalls said it is in a strong financial position and intends to recommend an unchanged final dividend for the year to March 1997.

Baring recruits rival

BARING Asset Management has poached Christopher Poil, a senior institutional fund manager at rival Mercury Asset Management, to be number two in its UK Equity team. Mr Poil, 32, joined MAM ten years ago and most recently worked for Carol Galley on its £20 billion Select fund. He will report to Nick Sykes, head of UK equities, in his new role. BAM's 13-strong UK team manages £4 billion of assets. Mr Sykes said Mr Poil would improve its stockpicking process.

Prelude raises £20.8m

PRELUDE TRUST, an investment company set up to tap the growth of small British technology stocks, has raised £20.8 million prior to joining the main market on Thursday. Dr Robert Hook and Andrew Allars, hope to emulate the success of their Prelude Fund II, which has grown by 43 per cent a year over the past seven years. Prelude Trust will invest between £500,000 and £2.5 million in unquoted companies in the software, biotech and specialist chemicals sectors.

BR success for Sema

SEMA, the computer services and software group, said it has been selected as the preferred bidder to acquire BR Business Systems, a company formed to take over the business services division of British Rail. BR Business Systems designs, operates and maintains the main railway information technology infrastructure for Britain, including ticketing, asset management, on-line management information and timetabling. It has 1,100 staff and £13.2 million net assets.

TL reviews assets

TOMORROWS LEISURE, which runs two hotels in the North East, said it is vigorously pursuing plans to realise the development potential of its under-used assets. In the six months to September 29 pre-tax profits fell to £22,000 (£29,000) on increased sales of £4.2 million. Both Redworth Hall Hotel and Hellaby Hall Hotel won best hotel awards and contributed to profits. Its Pleasure Island attraction is still trading at a loss.

Sun Life hits out at rivals as new business rises 11%

SUN Life Corporation claimed yesterday that some life companies were reducing premiums and raising commission in order to chase market share (Marianne Curphey writes).

Though Les Owen, the managing director, maintained that Sun Life had not sacrificed profitability for market share, he said: "The industry needs to take great care that customers' expectations are not being overinflated."

His comments came as Sun Life, a subsidiary of Sun Life and Provincial Holdings, unveiled total new business for 1996 (new regular premiums plus one tenth of single premiums) up 11 per cent to £264 million (£237 million).

Total new regular premiums increased 13 per cent to £145 million (£128 million). Single premiums increased 9 per cent to £12 billion (£11 billion).

Mr Owen said there had

been particular increases in the protection and money purchase pensions markets.

Meanwhile J Rothschild Assurance, 51 per cent owned by St James's Place Capital, achieved a 41 per cent increase in new business in 1996 from £61.4 million to £86.6 million. Total new regular premiums rose from £37.4 million to £52.4 million, while new single premiums grew from £240.2 million to £342.3 million.

Railtrack deal aims to halt decline in freight business

A DEAL worth £150 million a year has been struck between Railtrack and the American-owned operators of the former British Rail freight operations, aimed at reversing the decline of rail freight in Britain (Jonathan Pryn writes).

Railtrack and English Welsh & Scottish Railway (EWS), which bought BR's freight operations last year, said the breakthrough deal had been agreed after months of tough negotiations. It must

now go to John Swift, the Rail Regulator, for approval.

The provisional agreement replaces the complex and unwieldy structure of dozens of separate track access agreements that Railtrack had in place with a variety of BR freight subsidiaries. Instead, a new four-year "master" contract will allow English Welsh and Scottish to set far more economic and competitive prices to its freight customers. Although EWS will not pay

less for its access to the Railtrack network to start with, its unit costs will fall as its freight business picks up under the terms of the deal.

Robin Gibby, head of freight at Railtrack, said the certainty of the income stream from EWS would allow the company to step up its investment in the freight network. Freight on the railways now accounts for less than one tenth of the non-pipeline freight transport market in Britain.

Diamond jobs in London not threatened

By Jon Ashworth

A WIDE-RANGING investigation into the South African diamond industry will not affect jobs in London, it was claimed yesterday by the Central Selling Organisation.

The CSO, which markets most of the world's production of rough (uncut) gems, is associated with De Beers, the South African diamond producer. The CSO relies on the republic for only about 20 per cent of its business.

It had been suggested that the CSO's entire 1,000-strong London workforce was under threat. The CSO yesterday dismissed the reports as "nonsense", and said it would not be affected by a South African government commission of inquiry into the diamond industry. The CSO is controlled by Centenary, the Swiss-based offshore arm of De Beers.

Body Shop rival plans big expansion

By Sarah Cunningham

THE BODY SHOP is facing tougher competition at home in the face of plans by Bath and Body Works, its American rival, to expand its British network of shops.

Bath and Body Works said yesterday that it has appointed Stephen Schaffer, 39, the co-founder of the Knickerbox chain of lingerie stores, as its new managing director for Europe.

Beth Pritchard, president and chief executive of Bath and Body Works, said that she sees potential for up to 200 shops in the UK. There are now five — in Edinburgh, Derby, Nottingham, Milton Keynes and Watford. Over the next few months, the plan is to build brand recognition and study real estate possibilities.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank	Bank
	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.20	2.04
Austria Sch	19.70	18.20
Belgium Fr	57.76	53.45
Canada \$	2.597	2.137
Cyprus Cyp£	0.821	0.778
Denmark Kr	10.72	9.92
Finland Mk	8.52	7.87
France Fr	9.38	8.73
Germany DM	2.81	2.60
Greece Dr	434	409
Hong Kong \$	13.25	12.25
Iceland	123	102
Ireland Pt	1.07	0.99
Israel Sh	5.57	5.02
Italy Lira	2710	2562
Japan Yen	200.30	193.30
Malta	0.549	0.504
Netherlands Gld	3.125	2.905
New Zealand \$	2.50	2.28
Norway Kr	11.25	10.46
Portugal Esc	277.00	253.50
S Africa Rd	8.10	7.30
Spain Ptas	231.00	214.00
Sweden Kron	12.40	11.60
Switzerland Fr	2.44	2.25
Turkey Lira	194800	186500
USA \$	1.728	1.585

Prices for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to investor's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

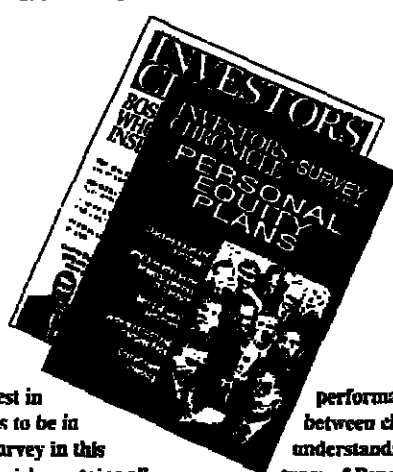
Blair's business

What has changed is that if you are a businessman you can quite easily vote either way now, as you can in the States. A lot of younger businessmen recognise that.

How Tony Blair wooed the City and industry

Business — The Sunday Times tomorrow

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If you're about to invest in a Pep, it certainly pays to be in the know. The Peps Survey in this week's Investors Chronicle contains all the information you need.

Included in the survey is a round-up of the latest Peps on the market and up-to-date performance tables.

You'll discover how Peps fit into the wider issue of personal financial planning. Will a Pep meet your investment goals, how do they compare with other investments and what are the rules on tax?

We also help you in choosing a suitable plan — deciding between income or growth, assessing the value of past

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PRUDENTIAL

A WORKING WEEK FOR: ROY REYNOLDS

Roy the rover revels in role of kick-start agent

Jon Ashworth meets the chief executive of the UK's overseas development finance institution, with investments in 56 countries

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday

ROY REYNOLDS must read those cocktail party introductions. "I run something called the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC)," he will tell you. "You know, the agency that provides

money for Third World projects — farms in Zambia, power stations in Pakistan, that sort of thing. We have £1.5 billion in investments spread around the place. You've never heard of us?"

Cut to a run-down street in Africa or Asia and things are rather different. Reynolds is the man with the blank cheque, a person of limitless power and influence in these nether regions of the world. He is analogous to the British coastal trader in Conrad's *Victory*, who steams up and down the South China Sea, laden with supplies for forgotten settlements. The villagers see him coming and launch into wild celebrations, knowing he is too kind-hearted to mark up his prices.

Reynolds, 57, has much in common with our fictional captain. Born and bred in Birmingham, he spent years in exotic climes, working in Curaçao, Brunei and Singapore in a long career with Shell, the Anglo-Dutch oil group. The difference is that Reynolds managed to adapt on returning to the UK. Our unhappy skipper pays a visit to England, catches a bad cold, and drops down dead. Coming home then was no easier than now.

The other main distinction involves money. Reynolds is intent on turning a profit, whatever the risks of investing in far-flung regions. CDC provides loans and start-up capital in areas where the closest bank is often hundreds of miles away. Fraud, theft and mismanagement are some of the dangers. But at least budding entrepreneurs are given a fighting chance.

Reynolds has slipped comfortably into his new role since taking early retirement from Shell five years ago. High Commissioners come cap-in-hand to his offices near the Tate Gallery in central London. His in-tray is filled with exotic proposals — fish farms in Zimbabwe, citrus plantations in Costa Rica. Reynolds and his emissaries sift through perhaps 1,000 requests a year. Only about 70 or 80 will ever be approved.

Pen-pushing in London is one thing, but it is out in the field that Reynolds comes into his own. In November, he surfaced in Lusaka, Zambia, at about the same time as British Airways workers were being pelted with rocks by rioting students. Meetings with ministers led to the Zambian Copper Belt, which is currently being privatised. Nearly 40 companies are in the market for state-owned mining and power assets. They include Anglo-American, Gencor and Australia's BHP.

Reynolds recalls: "The copper mines in

Zambia are whole townships, a bit like the old coalmines in the UK. One would go and meet the management, meet the people, talk to them about the issues."

A different type of Zambian produce is destined for Tesco, and other UK supermarket chains. CDC's extensive agricultural interests produce baby corn, beans, mange-tout, and fresh roses — flown out daily from Lusaka.

He travels by scheduled flight and Land Rover, chartering aircraft when the location is remote. Zambia led to Zimbabwe, where investors are seeking to breed tilapia (a freshwater fish) on Lake Kariba. To the north, workers are rehabilitating tea plantations in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, pruning wild tea bushes that intended can grow to 20ft or more. To the east, CDC is looking at container facilities for Maputo in Mozambique.

CDC has grown into a sprawling enterprise since the original Colonial Development Corporation was founded in 1948. Chaired by Lord Cairns, the chairman of BAT Industries, CDC is the UK's overseas development finance institution, holding more than 400 investments in 56 countries, and providing jobs for about 40,000 people. A predicted £300 million will be ploughed into projects in 1997 alone.

There are sugar mills, citrus groves — even power stations. CDC provides all the electricity on St Lucia in the Caribbean, and is about to take on the same role in Dominica. It recently made its first foray into Vietnam, financing the nation's first large-scale sugar refinery.

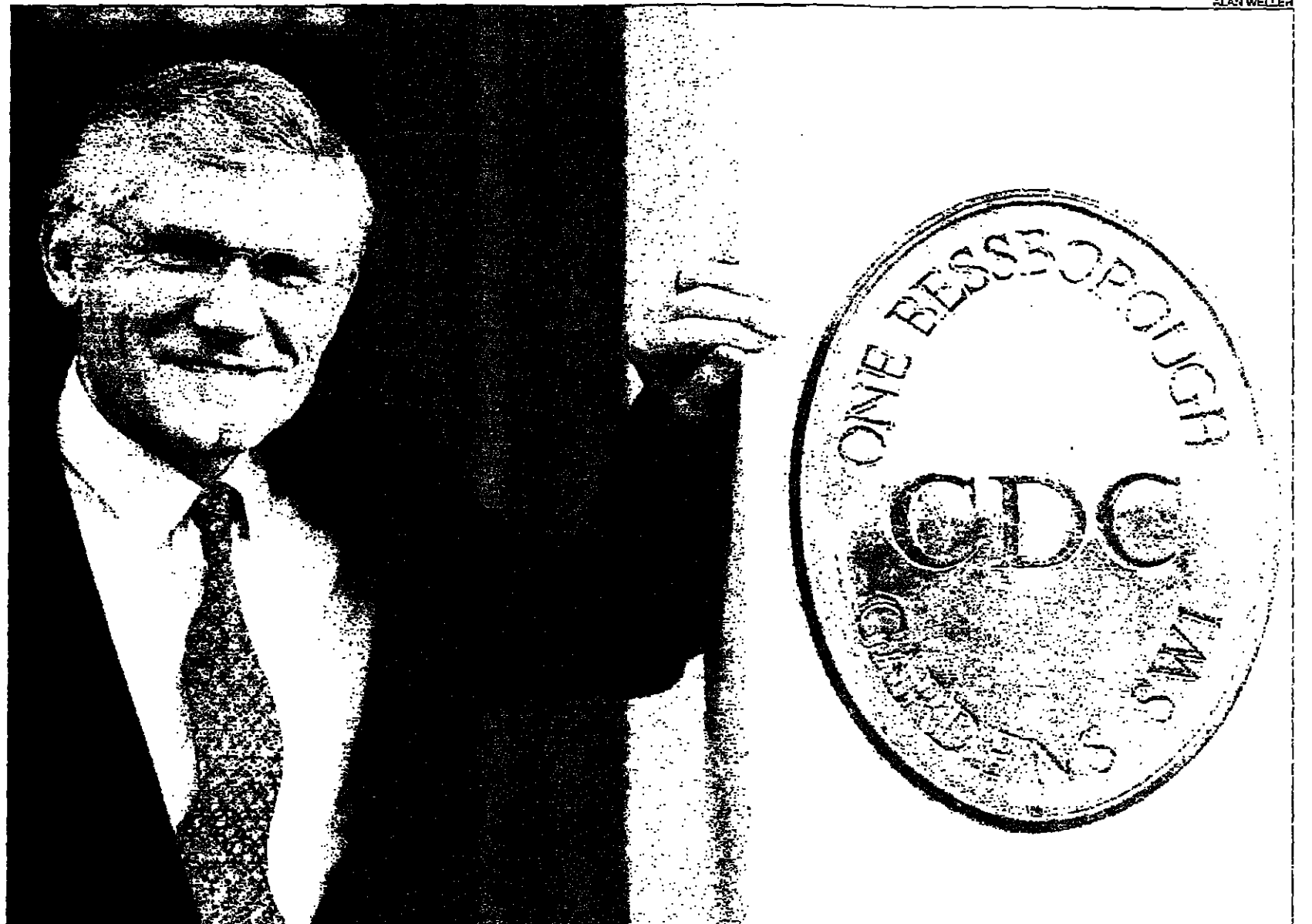
Reynolds has a clear sense of the CDC's priorities. "We are there to assist the economic development of the poorer countries in the world. We do that by making investments — equity

and loans — and by supporting businesses. It has to be commercial. It has to assist in the economic growth in that country. If others can do it without us then we say, please get on with it."

So is he free with his cheques? "To a degree, yes, but I don't think people see CDC any more as a source of cheap finance. I think they recognise that we are very much a commercial organisation. Even so, there are still not many people in Africa who are going in to make those sorts of investments."

Reynolds will often find himself explaining away the latest disastrous investment. "You have to accept that you're going to have failures," he says. "We're in a high-risk area, but the fact that we've been in these countries, sometimes for 40 years, means we can reduce the risks." CDC has offices on the ground, and keeps a watchful eye over its charges.

One — as yet untested — venture is taking shape in Soweto, the sprawling township on the outskirts of Johannesburg. Curiously, for a city with up to eight million inhabitants, Soweto does not have one formal shopping centre. Much of the trade is done by street hawkers. Residents



Roy Reynolds, CDC chief executive, has a clear sense of priorities. "We are there to assist the economic development of poorer countries in the world."

rely on taxi minibuses for those long treks to the supermarket.

Working with Norwich Properties, a South African life assurance group, CDC is backing three new shopping centre complexes, which are due to open in May. They will include grocery stores, banking facilities and fast-food outlets. Well intended, no doubt — but will they still be standing by Christmas? In the past less ambitious schemes have fallen prey to township rivalries.

Reynolds remains confident. "It's got to make sense to have shopping centres in Soweto, but the very fact they haven't been there recognises the risk profile that one runs. But one has to start. The important thing is seeing that the black community owns and runs them."

In 28 years with Shell he travelled widely. Imperial College led, first, to The Hague, and then to Curaçao in the Dutch Antilles. In the early Seventies he was dispatched to Brunei, where the world's first large liquid natural gas (LNG) project was taking shape. He went on to oversee the entire project.

Brunei led to Singapore, where Reynolds was put in charge of the enormous Shell refinery on Pulau Bukom island. He was lucky to find time for a round of golf

on Saturdays, let alone the occasional Tiger beer at Raffles. "In Singapore you're really working all hours," he recalls. "You lived on the island. You had to be there when the fire alarm went off."

Reynolds returned to the UK in 1984, taking charge of manufacturing, trading and distribution for Shell UK. He went on to look after the company's "downstream" UK operations, before opting for early retirement at the age of 52. The position of chief executive of CDC appealed at once.

"You're looking at a long-term investment business," Reynolds says. "Shell is a long-

term investment business. So is CDC. You actually have to work with local communities. You have to understand how people think, how they're motivated."

Reynolds is on the road ten to 12 weeks a year, assessing proposals and chivvying up existing projects. He recently returned from India, where he met politicians and business leaders. "India is looking for further investment. While they need it, they're always a bit concerned about how it should come in. CDC is perhaps the right sort of vehicle."

Holdings in India include a factory capable of producing one million light bulbs a day. A fund aimed at stimulating trade and investment in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh may follow. It would

mirror the Commonwealth Africa Investment Fund (Comafin), launched last year to support unquoted companies in sub-Saharan Africa.

Reynolds is not alone in finding an attractive bolthole in CDC. Bob Clark, head of CDC Industries, formerly ran ICI Explosives. Nick Selbie, in charge of CDC investments, was formerly with Kleinwort Benson and Barclays de Zoete Wedd (BZW). Robert Binyon, managing director of CDC financial markets, held senior posts at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell and Tulai Bank. A club for ageing executives seeking a second career? Or a desperately understated source of venture capital for the world's poorer nations? Out in the wilds of Africa it would not be hard to guess at the answer.

HIDDEN ASSETS

Managers put through their paces at Swinton Castle

Lindley Educational Trust offers more than courses, Joanna Pitman finds

Executives attending courses at Lindley Training Centre, a management training outfit within the castellated walls of Swinton Castle, west Yorkshire, should not be surprised at this time of year to see people carrying braces of pheasant as they return from the day's shoot. Contrary to some rumours, they are not part of a case study, but are there as guests of the Earl of Swinton, who has retained the right to use rooms in the castle that once belonged to his ancestors.

Built to display the political, royal and artistic influence of his 17th-century forebears, Swinton Castle today hosts management training courses for every level, from company directors to graduate trainees at GEC or ICI being put through their paces.

The building, now owned by the Lindley Educational

Trust, is an impressive house in landscaped grounds that was transformed into a castle in the 1820s. It is a fine asset, but it is as much a liability on the balance sheet, because of the high costs of maintenance and insurance.

Swinton Castle has had a colourful 300-year history. It embodies the story of the evolution of a family and clearly shows the differing tastes of each successive owner. The first house on the site was built by Sir Abstopus Danby, a descendant of the Scrope family, a distinguished line of soldiers who had been given land in the 14th century for supporting Edward II in his invasion of Scotland.

Seven generations after the Scrope lands had passed

down the female line into the Danby family, a befuddled parson who should have christened the eldest son Apsrope (son of Scrope) in honour of his ancestors, muddled his diction and christened him Abstopus instead. Sir Abstopus had decided to build a house on his inherited lands. It was a square construction of three floors topped by a cupola. By 1697 the house was completed and Sir Abstopus celebrated by spending the exorbitant sum of £4 16s on double leaf gold for the golden ball on the cupola.

Sir Abstopus died in 1727 and his son, also named Abstopus, had the parlour room remodelled and panelled in white. His son, William, added a range of

stable buildings in the 1750s and then had a great gate built to his own design. He also enlarged the house and developed the parkland, planting 6,000 fir trees and creating a chain of lakes.

In the 1780s his heir, William Danby the younger, set off on the Grand Tour and spent four years absorbing the architectural and artistic glories of Italy. He had inherited his father's enthusiasm for improvements and on his return spent 30 years on changes.

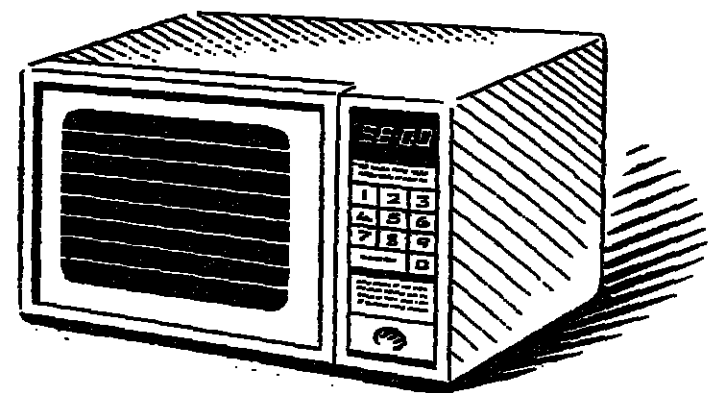
A new wing was added, a "great pond" dug in the grounds and 30,000 larch and Scots pine planted to create a vision worthy of the Grand Tourist's sophisticated eye. A museum was built for Danby's archaeological and botanical specimens and the museum's architect, who had a passion for castellated architecture, managed to persuade him to turn Swinton into a castle. A massive round tower with porte-cochère was built and the whole construction was topped with turrets and battlements to complete the illusion of a castle.

On Danby's death in 1833, Swinton Castle passed to his second wife and on to her cousin who sold it in 1882 to Samuel Cunliffe-Lister, a 68-year-old inventor and the fourth son of an old landed family. He extended the estate and added new decorative ornament.

Three generations later, the Cunliffe-Listers sold Swinton Castle and 17 acres to the Lindley Educational Trust. Two thousand managers now enjoy its hospitality every year.



Swinton was castellated after one of its owners returned from a Grand Tour



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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Sainsbury profits alert starts retail sector slide

SHARE prices and government securities fell sharply in response to programme selling overnight on Wall Street. London also suffered from a surprise profits warning by J Sainsbury, Britain's second biggest food retailer.

As the Dow Jones industrial average continued to lose ground in early trading yesterday, the FTSE 100 index finished just above its low for the day. It was left nursing a fall of 52.7 from Thursday's closing high to finish at 4,218.8, reducing the rise on the week to just 11.1. A total of 795 million shares changed hands.

Government securities fell by up to 1.1, reflecting losses among US Treasury bonds and German bunds.

Sainsbury was an early casualty, touching 339p before ending the session 51p down at 341p after the profits warning, which sent brokers reeling, and news of further provisions at its Texas City chain totalling £50 million.

The group, headed by David Sainsbury, chairman, said that the final picture would show profits of between £640 million and £650 million compared with City forecasts of between £700 million and £725 million. Brokers quickly moved to downgrade and the company's own broker changed from a "buy" to a "hold".

The trading statement revealed like-for-like sales growth of 7 per cent, at the top end of expectations but still short of rival Tesco. Almost 29.7 million shares changed hands.

The news from Sainsbury sent investors in the other food retailers rushing for the exits as Sainsbury fell 13p to 389p, Tesco 8p to 360p, Somerfield 4p to 169p, Asda 2p to 121p, and Kwik Save 12p to 306p.

BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of *The Times*, dropped 13p to 566p on turnover of 4.15 million shares amid reports that Granada had put its 6.5 per cent stake in the company up for sale. Granada was quick to deny any such suggestions.

Whisperers had swept the market-place first thing that the group was ready to accept offers of 52p a share for the holding. But brokers remain sceptical. Granada will be keen to benefit from BSkyB's move into digital television



David Sainsbury saw Sainsbury shares end 51p lower

and from pay-per-view screening of Premier League football. Granada, has already been in talks with local neighbour Manchester United about developing its own television facilities at the Old Trafford ground. Its shares closed 7p better at 867p on turnover of a decision by UBS, the broker, to upgrade its recommendation from a

Ofex-quoted Chartfield, which owns the Waverly Group of unit trusts, rose 5p to 55p on bid hopes. Gabriel Trust owns 22.6 per cent and is tipped to bid for the rest. But with the directors holding 38 per cent, Jupiter Tyndall 5 per cent and Amic 7.5 per cent, any bid will have to be agreed — at a substantial premium.

"hold" to a "buy". Manchester United firmed 3p to 732p.

Racal Electronics finally got moving by putting in a late run to finish 19p better at 268p on turnover of 3.29 million shares. This latest bout of speculative buying was prompted by talk that it is close to making a major disposal.

Reuters, the news agency and financial information specialist, dropped 17p to 682p on suggestions that the

drop-off in foreign exchange dealings, accounting for half its revenues, had begun to affect profits. The group is now estimated to be sitting on almost £1 billion in cash after abandoning plans to hand back £631 million in September.

A profits downgrade left David S Smith 6p lower at 284p. Merrill Lynch, the bro-

ker, has cut its 1997 profit estimate for the paper and packaging group by £8 million to £100 million. It has also reduced its forecast for 1998 by £5 million to £115 million.

Sun Life failed to respond to new business figures showing a rise of 13 per cent in 1996. The price finished 28p lower at 284p with Credit Lyonnais Laing, the broker, telling clients that the shares are at least 100p too expensive. It says the price has

been propped up by bid speculation and is too high on fundamentals alone.

FirstBus went into reverse, losing 4p at 221p after the Government ordered it to sell part of its operations in Scotland after the acquisition of SB Holdings, the Glasgow bus company.

Profit-taking left Zeneca 38p lower at £16.85, after briefly touching £17.47. The shares have climbed sharply this week on the back of the weaker pound and revived bid talks. After Thursday's sharp gains in the sector Cantab Pharmaceuticals caught up, finishing 40p dearer at 752p.

News of reduced losses lifted Park Foods 5p to 53p. The Christmas hamper supplier saw turnover covering the Christmas period soar to £100 million. The interim dividend has been pegged at 1.1p.

Roadshow Group dropped 8p to 183p on the news that TI Group had sold its entire 8.46 per cent stake in the market-place. The 4.75 million shares were placed at 182p.

A profits warning took its toll of Marshalls, the building supplies group, with the price falling 34p to 126p. Tough trading conditions at its concrete and stone division will leave profits "materially lower" than current market forecasts of around £23.5 million.

House of Fraser slipped 3p to 142p ahead of Monday's trading statement. The troubled department store group is expected to report disappointing trading conditions in the period preceding Christmas.

GILT-EDGED: Prices at the longer end of the market fell by almost £1 in response to similar losses among German bunds. These losses accelerated late in the day after renewed weakness among US Treasury bonds leaving prices in London closing at their low.

The March series of the long gilt finished £2.32 lower at £101.9p as the total number of contracts completed reached 65,000.

Treasury 8 per cent 2015 dropped £1.16 at £103.7p, while at the shorter end Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was 5p off at £103.6p.

NEW YORK: Shares were broadly lower at mid-session as sell programs and a weaker bond market intensified pressure on larger issues. At midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 34.25 points lower at 6,721.50.

New York (midday): Dow Jones 6,721.50 (-34.25) S&P Composite 774.09 (-3.47)

Tokyo: Nikkei Average 17,089.50 (-220.10)

Hong Kong: Hang Seng 13,379.95 (-230.70)

Amsterdam: EOE Index 676.66 (-6.54)

Sydney: ASX 3,423.00 (-11.5)

Frankfurt: DAX 2,998.26 (-35.22)

Singapore: Straits 2,235.42 (-12.50)

Brussels: General 1,137.80 (-9.66)

Paris: CAC-40 2,630.34 (-30.91)

Zurich: SMI 891.60 (-4.20)

London: FT 30 4,218.8 (-52.7) FT 100 4,218.8 (-52.7) FTSE Mid 200 4,218.8 (-52.7) FTSE Smallcap 4,218.8 (-52.7) FTSE Euronext 100 4,218.8 (-52.7) FT All-Share 4,218.8 (-52.7) FT Non Financials 4,218.8 (-52.7) FT Financials 4,218.8 (-52.7) FT Govt Bond 4,218.8 (-52.7)

Bulgaria: BSE 474.11

SEAQ Volume 1,687,100

German Mark 1,630.2 (-0.018)

Exchange Index 95.3 (-0.9)

Bank of England official base rate 5.00%

ESDRI 1.1661

RPI 194.4 Dec (2.9%) Jan 1997-100

RPI 194.2 Dec (1.9%) Jan 1997-100

Aquarius 174p

BZW Endowment Red 55

Enterprise Vent Cap 89p

Episcure Network 55

GB Railways 261

Hardy Underwriting 170

Neatall 50p

Oxford Biomedica 55p

Parkwood Holdings 74p

Pilat Technologies 57p

Sheffield United 101p

Sunderland 73p

Sutton Harbour 133p

Ashbury n/p (33) 2

Compel n/p (160) 34

Hall Eng n/p (250) 104

Morland n/p (300) 72p

Pressac n/p (180) 51p

Prism Rail n/p (330) 220

Shaftesbury n/p (137) 26

Wicks n/p (150) 16p

Closing Prices Page 53

RISER: Shield Diag 147p (+16p) CML Micro 142p (+13p) Ashted 285p (+16p) Cafe Inns 185p (+10p) Cantab Pharma 752p (+40p) WF Elect 595p (+20p) Datalink 688p (+10p) GKN 688p (+10p) Rowlinson Secs 197p (+20p) London Clubs 367p (+22p) SIG 289p (+10p)

FALLS: Sainsbury J 341p (-51p) Osborne & Little 845p (-75p) Arjo Wiggins 188p (-10p) Kwik Save 308p (-12p) French Conn 275p (-10p) Rolfe & Nolan 422p (-15p) Sideway 389p (-13p) RJB 395p (-10p) Cable Wireless 477p (-12p) B Petroleum 720p (-16p) Sage Co 554p (-12p)

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A mouse trap for fat cats

HOW do we steal the cream from the fat cats? Deep in the heart of Labour Party headquarters at Walworth Road, an army of scrappy but indignant mice is planning a heist. Starved of power, they have secret plans to build mouseholes but lack resources. The fat cats look lazy, sleek and ready to be fixed.

But like most cats, the utility bosses are not asleep, just napping. They too have plans — most are lobbying hard to escape the utility tax. Will all cats be taxed, or just fat ones? British Gas is no longer fat and what about BT? The fat phone company has been nice to the mice. But the Labour party is keeping mum. While the utilities spit and snarl — some Americans are even reaching for their lawyers — they do their cause no good.

The essence of the utility tax is politics, not economics. A future Labour Government will need money but no one has a clue how much could be raised, and small sums — a few billion — are hardly worth bothering about.

Unlike the 1980s tax on banks, Labour's levy cannot isolate a superprofit such as one gained from high interest rates or oil prices. A simple method would be to establish a benchmark return on capital. A tax could be constructed to cream off a percentage of any surplus return.

Easily done, but not necessarily sensible, such a tax on profit would punish efficiency and would ill suit a new consumer-conscious Labour Party. There is the problem of defining profits and the inevitable risk of spurring accountants into tax avoidance.

But all this may be irrelevant and the Labour Party's best move is to sit still and watch the cats prowl. Few utility directors fully understand the depths of public contempt for them. The more they oppose the tax, the more it will be popular. A court case pitting fat cats against the tax would be a god-send for Labour. Even now the mice may be planning to goad the cats into a rage.

Railtrack

EVERYONE hates big lorries. Noisy, smelly things that frighten small animals as well as car drivers. The green lobby wants more of the freight currently transported by truck to be transferred to the rails. Such a policy sounds sensible, but while freight volumes tend to grow, the economy, rail's share has been in decline, falling from 9 per cent in 1986 to 6 per cent in 1994. Railtrack believes it could fall further with competition from road hauliers and the decline of coal which accounts for a third of rail freight.

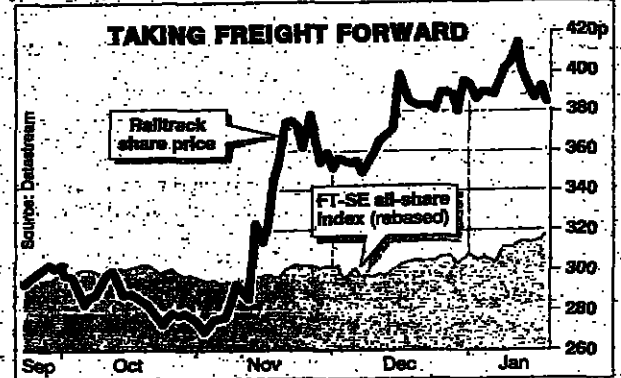
However, the Americans who have taken over English Welsh and Scottish Railways think differently. EWS accounts for 80 per cent of Railtrack's freight income, and yesterday renegotiated a

myriad of access contracts with the rail infrastructure provider. EWS believes it can increase traffic substantially, but it needs to offer a carrot to freight forwarders and that means lower prices.

As a rule of thumb, road haulage is the price advantage for distances up to 200 miles after which rail becomes competitive. But there are few jour-

neys in Britain of that magnitude and lorries have the edge in flexibility.

As a monopoly access provider, Railtrack had no need to offer a price cut to EWS but was right to do so. Without it, EWS has little hope of luring customers away from road hauliers and Railtrack is in this game for an even longer haul.



J Sainsbury

THE stock market gave a resounding and fully deserved raspberry to the J Sainsbury dream team yesterday. After all, the coach claims to have assembled a top notch management with a winning strategy, as David Sainsbury did, the fans cannot fail to be disappointed if their team is knocked out in the first round, however tough the competition.

Life is indeed tough on the high street. Retailers are struggling with low inflation, rising property and wage costs and a finicky consumer. Competition is formidable — all four of the big food chains are well-resourced and are investing heavily.

Meanwhile, the recent recession has made shoppers also loyal. British consumers began to adapt the demand and bargain consciousness attitudes of their North

American counterparts. What is worse, economic recovery shows no sign that shoppers will revert to mere acceptance of higher prices.

In a bid to stop the rot and recover market share, David Sainsbury appointed Dino Adriano and David Brenner as joint chief executives: the move was welcomed and gave a fillip to the share price. However, the confidence appears to have been misplaced. Some £60 million of extra costs landed suddenly in the profit and loss account during December. No-one has suggested the new management were off enjoying the easy snow at a continental resort. Therefore, a catalogue of fumbles and mistakes must be laid at their doors.

One or two of the cost problems were not Sainsbury's fault — a labour dispute at Giant Food in the US, in which Sainsbury's holds a minority stake, which cost £5 million. Elsewhere the errors are blatant. Sainsbury prices its supermarket staff expecting a martian rush in early December: an extraordinary decision when the record suggests shoppers buy food as late as possible. Hence the decision by Asda, Sainsbury's, and Tesco to open some stores all night in the run-up to the holiday.

Sure enough, Sainsbury felt no pressure to follow suit. Christmas comes but once a year but every year it arrives on December 25. Sainsbury mutters that it got its timing wrong. In a world of statisticians and forecasters, that sounds utterly absurd. The problem with this profit warning is that it goes beyond this year's or next year's results. The problem is that the management have just lost all credibility.

EDITED BY CARL MORTIMER

MOVERS OF THE WEEK

	Current price	Week's change	
Thomson	201p	-50p	Profits warning
Peptide	278p	+30p	Medeva invests £3m
J Sainsbury	341p	-51p	Profits warning
Victrex	198p	-88p	Profits warning
Kingsbury	203p	-96p	Profits warning
800 Group	140p	-86p	Profits warning
Life Sciences Int	138p	+44p	Thermo Instrument bids
Jacquart Vert	50p	+17p	Lilloeolowale takes stake
William Cook	422p	+52p	Management counter-bid

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HOME FRONT 36

Leaseholders
battle against
their landlord

WEEKEND
MONEY

LOOKING AHEAD

Money Guides.
New series starts
next Saturday



THE TIMES: PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Societies in
turmoil over
rate pledges

Marianne Curphey reports on a court case that
has important implications for society savers

Building society bosses are this weekend poring over a landmark legal ruling which could open the floodgates for tens of thousands of investors to sue them over declining savings rates.

They are urgently reappraising marketing literature to check whether bold claims about investment returns can be justified.

The savings industry has been rocked to its core after *The Times* reported how Robert Anthony, 49, a Suffolk schoolteacher, successfully sued the Norwich and Peterborough Building Society in the small claims court after it cut the rate on his tax-exempt special savings account. If the 19,144 other savers with the same Tessa did likewise, it could cost Norwich and Peterborough £5.5 million.

The case lays all other banks and building societies whose investment performance falls short of their initial claims open to similar action.

The Building Societies Association yesterday began circulating copies of the Norwich County Court judgment to all its members. Mr Anthony said he opened his account after finding Norwich and Peterborough offered one of the best high street rates. When he started his Tessa Elite with

£3,000 in January 1992, it was paying 12 per cent and the society's marketing literature claimed it would pay "a very competitive rate of interest". However, he alleged the rate soon fell and over four years, Norwich and Peterborough had failed to fulfil this claim by maintaining an interest rate near the bottom of recognised league tables.

District Judge Jim Horrocks agreed and awarded him £285 — a sum equal to the extra interest he would have earned had his money been in an ac-

National heroes 37

count paying an average rate, plus £50 court costs. Mr Anthony said a society offering a top rate of interest would have paid an extra £500.

He kept track of his Tessa and questioned the rates with his local branch. They replied by saying that "at any one time, a particular type of account may be more or less competitive than another in comparison with other financial institutions".

Judge Horrocks said: "The plaintiff's case is that the defendants' interest rates, while starting off well, fell after about 18 months and thereafter far from being very competitive were then about the worst of all its competitors'... the defen-

dants say the words 'very competitive' were a mere puff and/or have no contractual relevance and/or other legal effect." He described how solicitors for the Norwich and Peterborough argued that Mr Anthony had accepted and signed the terms and conditions of the Tessa, which made no mention of the words in the brochure. But the judge said he had reached the conclusion that "very competitive" meant "very competitive with our competitors" and that in turn meant "as good as if not better than those of its competitors from time to time".

He added that as Mr Anthony began to take an interest in his returns and raised the issue with the society, "so the wording of the brochure was watered down by the defendants from 'very competitive' to 'competitive' and finally to 'attractive' rates of interest. Why would they have done this if they were confident the words were simply a puff?"

The Norwich and Peterborough said it believed it had "good grounds" to appeal, but had decided not to.

Mr Anthony said: "I am delighted. I paid £50 to take on a multimillion pound company in court and won. Other investors in a similar position should write and ask for the extra interest too."



Vindicated: Robert Anthony took on the might of the Norwich and Peterborough and won

Late payers
face extra
tax charge

Accountants are urging their clients to pay the first tax demand under self-assessment on time — if they do not, they face paying 8.5 per cent interest on the unpaid tax. They could have to pay this, even if the Revenue has failed to tell them how much their bill is.

About 1.5 million taxpayers should have been sent "statements of account" requesting payment of half their 1996-97 tax liability by the end of this month. However, according to accountants many people have not received the demands for tax, and even if they have the demands are wrong.

Those who have not received the demands will still have to pay the tax. Martin Donn, personal tax partner at Blick Rothenberg, warns all taxpayers to look carefully at their statements of account, as a proportion have been incorrectly calculated.

The amount to be paid is assessed on the previous year's tax liability. The tax is due in two payments — one at the end of this month, and one in July. Maurice Fitzpatrick, of Chantrey Vellacott, the accountants, said: "I would urge anyone who thinks they could be due to pay a bill to contact their tax office as soon as possible."

Mr Fitzpatrick points out that the statements of account may also not be accurate because some accountants have still to finalise the 1995-96 accounts. However, he said: "You still have to pay. You are not absolved from any tax liability."

Those who do receive a statement of account can choose not to pay the entire amount, if they believe their tax liability will be less than in previous years. However, they risk paying interest if this proves not to be the case.

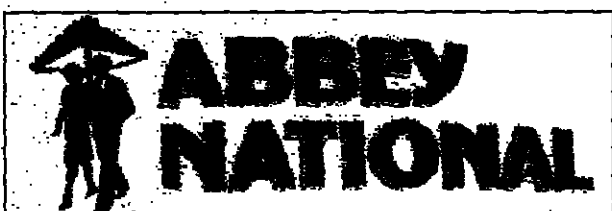
Self-assessment will eventually affect about eight million taxpayers, including the self-employed, partners, and others with complicated tax affairs.

CAROLINE MERRELL

Abbey aims to attract float bonuses

The Abbey National is stepping up the battle for the estimated £20 billion that will be released into the economy this year after building society and life insurance company floats. The bank has raised savings rates by up to 0.75 per cent to try to attract millions of those looking forward to average payouts of £1,100 this year as the Halifax, Alliance & Leicester, Woolwich, Bristol & West, Northern Rock and Norwich Union convert.

Abbey suffered a big outflow of savings after it took over the National & Provincial last year. About £600 million of cash was moved out of the bank in the weeks following the takeover as former members of National & Provincial placed their savings with building societies offering



higher rates of interest. By raising rates the Abbey is hoping to attract back some of this money. It declined to say how much money had been switched, but said that 100,000 of the 640,000 who had opted for shares rather than cash had sold their holdings. The improved rates will help many of Abbey's remaining 12 million savers.

Ambrose McGinn, director of retail savings, said: "This move will both reward our existing investors and attract new investors currently with other banks and building societies."

The biggest increases are for savers with the most to invest who are willing to keep the money with the society for a long time. For instance, tax-

exempt special savings account savers, with £9,000 saved or to save, see a rise from 6.4 per cent to 6.7 per cent, while the rate on one year of its three-year stepped bonus bond has been increased by 0.75 per cent to 6.75 per cent. The rates on the more popular instant access account and 90-day account have been increased only 0.1 per cent for those with big savings. For example, the rate on the instant saver account has risen from 3.15 per cent to 3.25 per cent for those with more than £10,000 to invest.

The other societies say that they have no immediate plans to follow suit. They note that they raised their rates this month in response to the increase in base rates at the end of last year.

CAROLINE MERRELL

WEEKEND MONEY
is edited by Anne Ashworth

Football's Italian job

It comes to something when Juventus, perhaps the most famous football club in the world, wants to take a listing on the London stock market because the Italian authorities are less than keen. The problem is that Juve, which is controlled by the Agnelli family of Fiat fame, does not have the required three-year record of profits to be allowed to join the Milan exchange. And despite having a turnover of £15 billion (£44 million), last season it managed to lose 14 million lire.

The economics of Juve rather mirror those of our largest football clubs, such as Manchester United, Arsenal and Newcastle United. TV and sponsorship income is now dwarfing the amount the club gets from the supporters who come through the turnstiles. However, only for a handful of clubs is the entire income enough to cover the costs of buying the sort of players who appear on the pitch and to pay their spiralling wages. If Premiership clubs are going to spend £15 million for Alan Shearer and offer Giuseppe Signori a reputed £2 million-a-year salary, then the pot of gold that is supposed to come with pay-per-view TV is going to have to be pretty damn exciting to balance the books.

Last week's collapse of Millwall is a salutary lesson. The club was floated in 1989 when it was in the top flight. It was relegated, but built an all-seater stadium which could accommodate the crowds it would get when it went back up. To help pay for this, there would be pop concerts, boxing fights and other events. But Oasis did not want to play in New Cross. And Millwall was relegated

PERSONAL
INVESTOR



JASON
NISSE

again, ending up with 44 players (12 more than Arsenal), £10 million debts and losses of £3 million a year. David Buchler, who having been involved with Tottenham Hotspur and Barnet knows a thing or two about troubled clubs, is currently trying to sort out the mess and refloat the Lions of southeast London.

Two of the recently floated clubs — Southampton and Sunderland — have real prospects of being relegated from the Premiership this season, as does Coventry City, which is eyeing a float. While the combination of good property assets and decent management should keep these from the fate of Millwall, investors have to be aware of the danger.

But at least in floated clubs, there is the reassurance of a prospectus and a relatively liquid market. The massive gains in recent weeks have been in the shares traded on Oxfex and on a matched-bargain basis — such as Arsenal, Everton, Liverpool and Manchester City. Take Aston Villa. In the

summer it restructured its capital so that there was only one class of share. At that point, shares were £450 each, valuing the club at £44.5 million. Every month Albert E Sharp, the broker, auctions a block of shares in Villa. In January the entire block was bought by one investor for £1,200 a share. Since then an offer of £1,650 has been made for these shares, which would value the club at a staggering £149 million. Expect an even higher price for the February auction.

This boom has been fuelled by unrealistic expectations of a rosy future and a shortage of stock. But calling the peak of the market is dangerous. Joseph Lewis, the catering and currency billionaire whose wealth has taken him from the East End to the Bahamas, last week took a £40 million bet on Rangers. His investment is being used to fund a hotel at Ibrox, which is not exactly in the nicest part of Glasgow, and values the club at £160 million.

Lewis's cohorts believe Rangers can be floated in two to three years with a value of twice that and are hunting for other clubs in which to invest. There is talk that he may be involved in proposals from Michael Tabor, the racehorse owner, to invest £30 million in West Ham United and he is known to have made approaches to Arsenal.

The real test will come with the Newcastle United float. Timed for April, it will easily value the club at £200 million. This will be five times turnover and about 20 times operating profits before buying overpriced footballers.

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Sara McConnell on a disputed case of freehold purchase

When leaseholders' rights to buy are flouted by a landlord

Owners of seven leasehold flats in Littlehampton are fighting to buy back the freehold of their block from their landlord after discovering that he bought it for less than a quarter of the price quoted to the leaseholders.

This was a clear breach of the rules governing leaseholders' rights of first refusal when their freehold is up for sale. But Rubypoint, the company which bought the freehold, is refusing to sell at the same price for which it bought, saying the leaseholders had failed to exercise their right to do this within the set times laid down in law.

Stella Evans and her fellow flat-owners received a notice from Rubypoint in January 1992, telling them that the company was planning to buy the freehold of the Victorian conversion block for £4,500 and asking if they wanted to buy the freehold at this price. The leaseholders rejected the offer, because they could not afford to pay nearly £650 each.

They discovered subsequently that Rubypoint had bought the freehold for just £1,050 from the previous freeholder. Miss Evans said: "If we had been told the true price we would certainly have exercised our right to buy."

Robert Enticott of the solicitors George Ide, Phillips, for the leaseholders, said: "It is our contention that the majority of leaseholders would have responded if given the true price and that they did not exercise their rights because they were given false information."

Nicholas Hyam and Gary Mills, the directors of Rubypoint in 1992, were jailed at Croydon Crown Court last summer for a total of nearly five years on charges of deception and theft from leaseholders, unrelated to the disputed price of the freehold of one of their properties. This week Mr Hyam lost his appeal in the High Court.

The current director of Rubypoint is listed at Companies House as Tony Maio. Mr Maio, who also owns a garage, has so far refused to take responsibility for what the leaseholders' solicitors allege is deliberate fraudulent misrepresentation to put the leaseholders off buying their freehold.

He declined to comment when contacted by *The Times* this week, saying: "It is nothing to do with me. I wasn't a director at the time. You need to talk to Mr Hyam. And it's none of your business."

Mr Enticott rejects the argument of Mr Maio's solicitor that the leaseholders have forfeited their rights because they did not exercise them soon enough. Mr Enticott told Mr Maio two months ago in a letter: "It would appear that a false statement of fact was made in the original notice,



On the home front: left to right, fellow leaseholders Paula Hatton, Liz Owen, Alex Penfold and Stella Evans

that it was made without belief in its truth, that it was intended that our clients would act to their detriment upon the statement, that they did so act and that consequently they have suffered damage."

Mr Enticott says he has received no explanation from Rubypoint for the purchase at a price lower than that quoted to the leaseholders. Mr Maio says he is still willing to sell the freehold but at its current price, which would almost certainly be much higher than Rubypoint bought it for. The leaseholders are now deciding whether to sue Rubypoint for their losses.

The Law and Leaseholders' Rights

Since 1987, leaseholders have had the right of first refusal if the freehold of their block is up for sale. But this rule was flouted widely by landlords because there were no sanctions for ignoring it. Freeholds changed hands frequently at auction without leaseholders' knowledge and many flat-owners have found themselves on the receiving end of large

service charge bills and proposals for major works from their new landlords.

New laws came into force last October as part of the 1996 Housing Act which make it a criminal offence for landlords not to offer tenants the right of first refusal. Under the Act:

■ Landlords wanting to sell must serve a notice on leaseholders offering them first chance to buy. If you receive a notice from the seller, you have up to two months for a majority of leaseholders in the block to respond.

■ Some landlords claim they

can get away with allowing the potential buyer to serve a notice on leaseholders, as Rubypoint did. But the Court of Appeal ruled 18 months ago that this was not an alternative and did not remove the seller's responsibility to offer leaseholders the freehold. If leaseholders receive a notice from a person or company proposing to buy the freehold of your block, a majority must respond within 28 days that you want to be served with notices by the seller.

■ If a landlord sells behind leaseholders' backs, leaseholders now have up to four

months, not two, from when they find out they have a new landlord to serve a notice on him. He must reveal how much he paid for the freehold and explain to leaseholders and they have the right to buy. Leaseholders then have six months, not three, to buy. Previously, landlords were not obliged to reveal what they had paid for freeholds.

■ Leaseholders have the right to buy at the price at which it was sold to the new landlord. Freeholds must not change hands at a lower price than that leaseholders were offered until a year has passed.

'London property could see a rise of 15%'

UBS is expecting house prices to rise by about 15 per cent in London this year because of the sharp fall in the number of people with negative equity. Overall, the bank expects house prices to rise by about 10-12 per cent over the year, helped by lower unemployment, low inflation and rising wages.

According to its calculations, the number of households with negative equity fell by 129,000 in the fourth quarter of 1996 to 465,000 from 594,000. The fall means that 853,000 people have escaped the negative equity trap over the past 12 months.

UBS found that the average amount of negative equity had fallen in the fourth quarter to £4,100 from £4,200 in the third quarter. The total value of negative equity fell again in the fourth quarter to £1.9 billion, a £600 million decline on the third quarter total of £2.5 billion.

However, UBS emphasises that the number of people who have insufficient equity in their property to move still remains high, at 1.8 million. Insufficient equity is where homeowners have less than £5,000 equity in their property. This is the amount deemed necessary to finance a move in the owner-occupied sector.

The number with insufficient equity still represents one in five of all mortgaged households, and will continue to act as a drag on the market.

UBS also claims that more than a third of households with negative equity have a difference of over £5,000 between the value of their property and their mortgage, while 22,000 households have more than a £10,000 shortfall.

UBS believes that a hard core of households with negative equity will remain. Properties that will remain particularly hard to sell will be one-bedroom and studio flats.

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Heroic challenge saves the day

Robert Anthony and District Judge Jim Horrocks should be the heroes to each one of the nation's 11 million savers.

For too long building societies have been able to promise that the rate on a new account would be unbeatable and then to break this pledge. Customers who dared to complain could be easily fobbed off.

In the Norwich County Court this month, Mr Anthony and Judge Horrocks may have ended this underhand practice (see page 35). At the same time, Mr Anthony, a science teacher, did what each of us dreams of doing: teaching a financial institution a lesson.

While others would have shrugged off their irritation at seeing their Tessa rate fall from the "very competitive" to the barely adequate, Mr

Anthony decided to take the matter to court. This followed an exchange of letters in which the Norwich and Peterborough called the much-reduced return on its Tessa "very reasonable". Reasonable, in whose eyes, one wonders.

In court, the Norwich and Peterborough described the phrase "very competitive" as a "mere puff", without contractual relevance or legal effect. In other words, the society admitted that its aim was to entice investors, rather than to pay a better-than-average rate.

Fortunately for the society's 20,000 other Tessa savers, and anyone who believes that a building society should have a strict regard for truth, Judge Horrocks begged to differ.

He was also rightly unimpressed by the society's mis-



COMMENT
ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance
Editor

guided attempt to compare its rates favourably with those of high street banks, whose rates seldom rival those of the building societies. There is too much selective use of statistics in the society's sales talk. This is a habit that they have caught from the unit trust industry, where dates are frequently manipulated to make mid-dling performance data seem dazzling. The whole pretence is then made plausible by the deft use of bar charts. In the

same way, larger societies like to contrast their rates with those of their peers rather than with the often superior offers of their smaller rivals.

Judge Horrocks ruled that a savings account is like any other consumer product, where the buyer is entitled to rely on the description on the packet.

Some building societies will now be looking for every way to disregard the Horrocks judgment. They

should have learnt sooner the importance of moderating their language.

Taxing debut

THE self-assessment debate may be coming to pass sooner than we predicted.

On January 31, 15 million people will have to pay a bill for half their 1996-97 tax liability (see page 35). Thousands have yet to receive these first self-assessment demands. But they will still be obliged to pay interest on the unpaid tax even though they have no idea of what they owe. This means that they will be paying a penalty of 8.5 per cent for the taxman's inefficiency. The Revenue refused to say whether these penalties will be waived. What a sorry way to begin the greatest reform to income tax since its invention.

War widows gain small victory on pensions rights

A fan of *Coronation Street* will know, a war widow who falls in love faces a hazardous choice. In Granada's television series, the dilemma which confronted Clare Palmer was whether to live with Des Barnes, and so forfeit her war widow's pension, or to renounce romance and settle for financial security.

In the event, Clare decided her man meant more than her pension and acted accordingly. For real-life Clare Palmers, for whom such choices turn out badly, there is now the prospect of a better future, thanks to a decision made last week by Lord Mackay of Ardbrecknish, Minister for War Pensions at the Department of Social Security (DSS).

After a long-running campaign by the War Widows Association, Lord Mackay decided to simplify the rules so that the DSS pension would be restored to all war widows who had ceased living with their partners. "He hopes the change will come into effect by April this year," said a DSS spokesman.

At present, war widows forfeit both their DSS and Forces Family Pensions if they remarry or live with a man as husband and wife. War widows who began to cohabit but then ceased to live with their partners face little prospect of their DSS pensions being restored. The setting up of the Benefit Fraud Line last year has made discovery more likely.

According to recent DSS guidelines, living in the same household and sharing expenses would count as evidence of cohabitation.

Government
decision offers
a glimmer of
hope after long
campaign, says
Jenny Grove

However, the absence of a sexual relationship "does not necessarily prove that a couple are not living as husband and wife".

Those who cohabited before April 1993 may have their DSS pensions restored, subject to a means test. Those who began living with their partners after that date were given one year's pension to pay off their entitlement and so have no such chance, whatever their financial circumstances.

Despite Lord Mackay's concession, Baroness Strange, president of the War Widows Association, says the move is only a small step in the right direction. War widows' pen-

sions "should be paid for life, regardless of future marital status", she told the House of Lords last week.

One war widow who agrees is Caroline Anderson. Mrs Anderson's husband, Squadron Leader Neil Anderson, was killed in August 1990 in a Tornado accident.

Before the accident, frequent moves and the demands of service life had meant little chance of Mrs Anderson building a career of her own. A war widow's children receive a pension as long as they are in full-time education. Mrs Anderson's eldest son left school 15 months ago. Now aged 17, he hopes to go to college and university but has lost his pension.

Mrs Anderson said that pension rules condemn her to perpetual widowhood, adding: "By definition, aircrew are fairly young, so the rules condemn young widows to be the single parents that everybody criticises."

Neil spent 19 years in the Air Force and he contributed to his occupational pension. So why shouldn't that pension — his Forces Family Pension — be paid for life?

Major General Peter Bonnet, who heads the Officers' Pensions Society, said: "We're campaigning for all military widows' and widowers' pensions — not just war widows — to be paid for life."

That was what Sir Michael Bett recommended in 1995 when he carried out an independent review of the Armed Forces Occupational Pensions Scheme at the Ministry of Defence's request. We're still awaiting the ministry's decision.



Palmer: gave up pension



Caroline Anderson says she now faces perpetual widowhood

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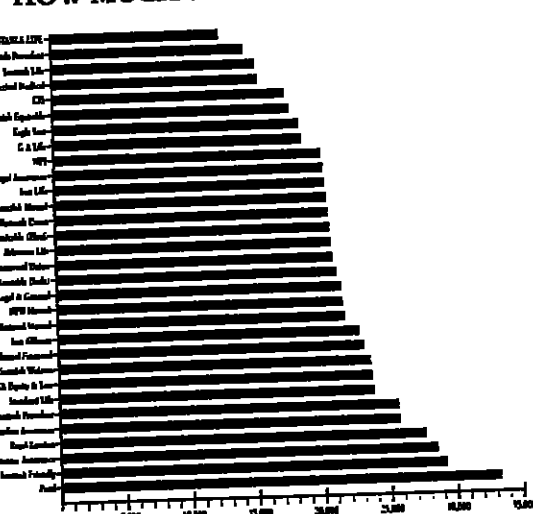
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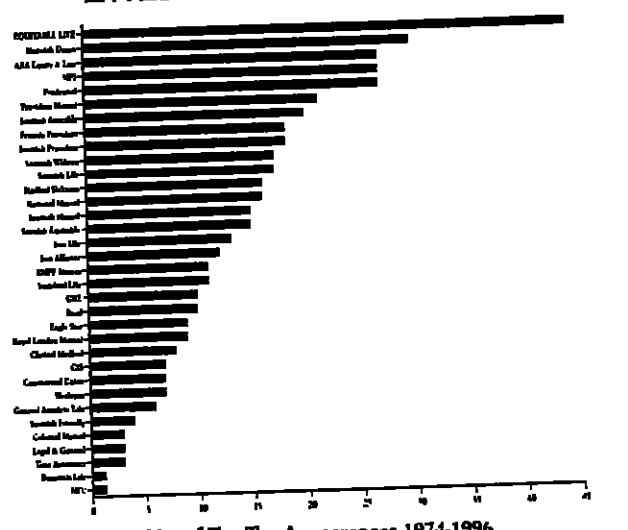
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Source: Planned Savings surveys of regular contribution with-profits personal pension plans, 1974-1996

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Heat is on active fund managers

Gavin Lumsden looks at how investment companies hope to eradicate the risky human touch

Fund managers such as Nicola Horlick, the million-pound superwoman suspended by Deutsche Morgan Grenfell (DMG) this month, could become an increasingly rare breed in the brave new world of investment. Investment companies are increasingly impatient with their highly paid staff either getting the market wrong and losing them money, or defecting to rivals and leaving them in the lurch. Instead, they are turning to techniques such as index tracking and quantitative management, which aim to eradicate the risk of using temperamental human beings.

The argument in favour of index tracking is almost irresistible. Over the long term, the direction of the stock markets, as measured by indices such as the FT-SE 100 and FT-SE All-Share, is remorselessly upwards. However, most active fund managers fail to do better than the indices. Why not, the argument goes, buy every share in the index and hang on as your money grows?

Certainly, this passive approach has proved popular

with investors as it has combined above-average performance with lower charges. According to Virgin Direct, only seven out of 74 UK Peps have beaten the All-Share in the past five years, and most of these were tracker funds.

Rowan Gormley, the company's managing director, believes the ructions at DMG underline the beauty of a tracker's simplicity. "Is Nicola Horlick worth £1 million? If she is so important and she can just march out of the door, doesn't it show that it is not good enough to find the right company and choose the right fund, which is complicated enough. You have to follow the individual career of the fund manager as well."

The simplicity also appeals to the newcomers to the financial services industry, such as Virgin. Another example is Guardian Direct, the insurer, which this week launched its first investment product, the Top 100 tracker Pep. Investors can put in lump sums of between £1,000 and £6,000 or save £30 to £500 per month in a fund investing in all the well-established blue chips of the



The hope is that tracker funds will be as unshakable as Inspector Morse and Sergeant Lewis

Based on £1,000 investment (offer to bid)				
Name	1 year	3 years	Duration of investment 5 years	Charges
FT-SE All Share Index	1,138.47	1,510.69	2,001.18	1% annual, 0.25% exit fee
Virgin UK Index Tracking	1,148.55	1,283.30	1,801.94	0.5% annual
Guardian UK Index	1,148.57	1,283.30	1,801.94	0.5% annual
Legal & General UK Index	1,144.43	1,220.85	1,801.94	0.5% annual
Northwich UK Index Tracking	1,091.00	1,211.81	1,801.94	0.5% annual (Global Tracker Pep)
MG UK Ind Td Inc	1,077.26	1,188.42	1,801.94	0.5% (Pep) initial, 0.7% annual
Old Mutual UK All Share Mir Inc	1,040.22	1,178.03	1,801.94	1% annual

Source: HSW

FT-SE 100 and get the tax benefits of the Pep. It rubs shoulders with FT-SE 100 trackers from companies such as Barclays and Direct Line.

But Steve Abbot, marketing director at Legal & General, says if you are serious about tracking you should use funds

that follow the FT-SE All-Share. He says: "The whole rationale of tracking is to take away the subjective judgement and say 'I want to buy the whole market'. If you select the top 100 companies you are effectively making a judgment that large companies are going to do

better than smaller companies, which might not be the case. Strangely, tracker funds never quite live up to their name. As the table shows, not one of the All-Share trackers actually matched the performance of the FT-SE All-Share, pound for pound over one, three and five years. This is because all funds have a "tracking error" (0.25 per cent in Legal & General's case), which is then compounded by the effect of charges.

For instance, in the past 12 months £1,000 in the Virgin UK tracker would have become £1,148.55, £44 more than Legal & General's UK tracker, despite a 1 per cent annual management fee, twice that of L&G. Virgin also charges a 0.5 per cent fee if you leave the fund in the first five years. Ironically, one of the highest charges is Morgan Grenfell, presumably relying on its reputation as an active fund manager to charge a 5 per cent initial fee (3 per cent if held as a Pep) and a 0.75 per cent annual fee. Trackers also differ in their approach. Virgin's higher annual fee could be because it has opted for full replication of the index, buying all 920 stocks.

This is expensive because it entails many small deals in illiquid stocks at the bottom of the index. L&G buys only half of the stocks. Trackers work best in mature markets such as the UK, US and Europe. This gives active managers more of a chance in less-developed markets such as Latin America and the Far East, but how long will this last? As emerging markets adopt the standards and practices of the core markets, they will start to generate the tor-

rents of data on which quantitative analysts thrive.

Quant management is an even deadlier threat to active managers. By using banks of computers, quant specialists crunch their way through any stock market data they can lay their hands on.

Active managers of retail funds have already felt the squeeze from this approach. Last October Barclays merged its UK and US investment management divisions to form Barclays Global Investors, sacked most of its fund managers and instituted a new quant-based "advanced active" style. Old Mutual, a South African investment house, has also applied the technique to its US and Japan unit trusts, and Invesco is expected to adopt a similar style when it completes its merger with AIM, a US company, next month.

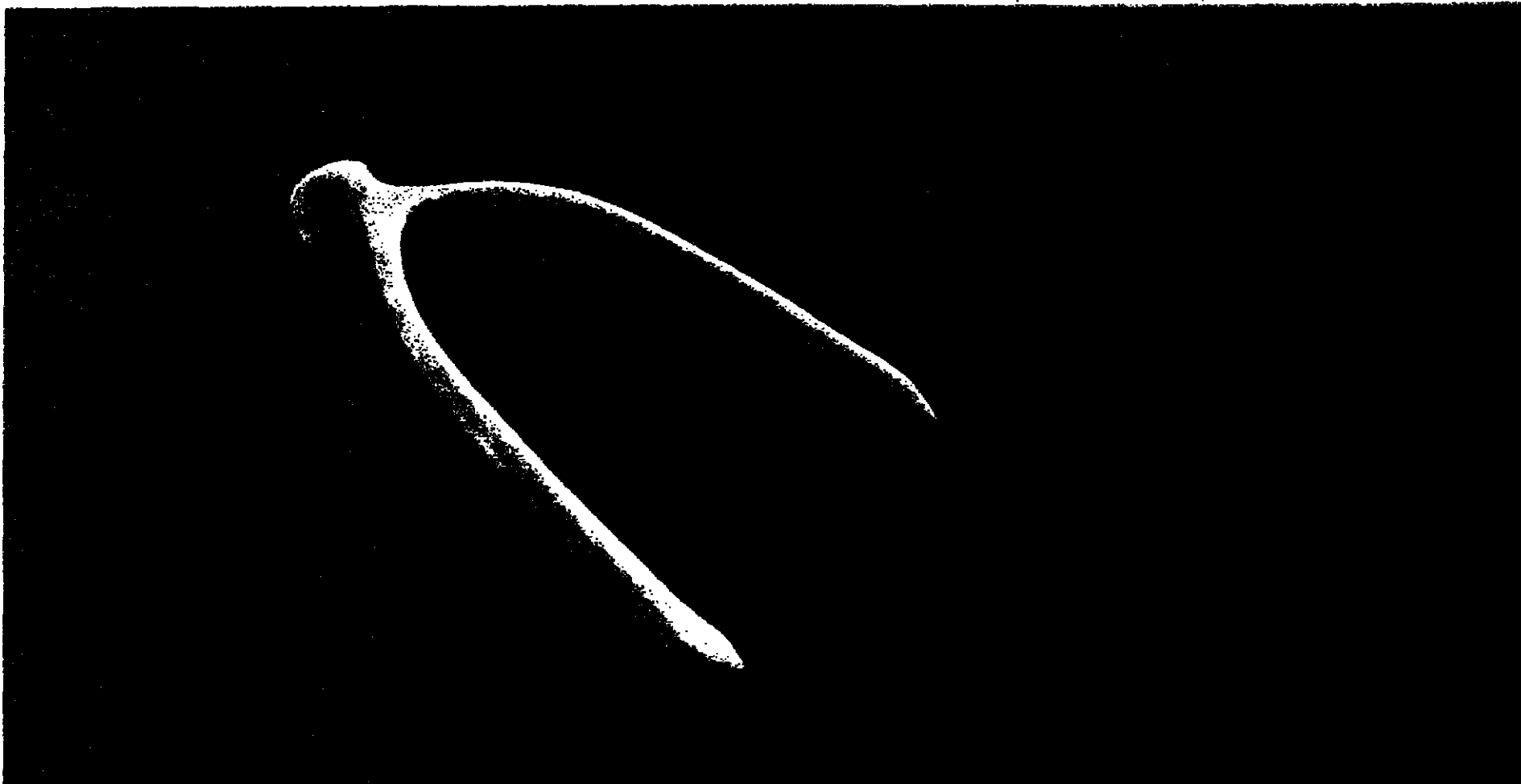
As Kevin Coldiron of BGI explains, quant management uses traditional stock-picking tools such as cashflow to price and dividend yields. But it also looks at other "signals", such as a director buying shares in his own company.

James Woodcock, BGI's head of quant, says the company has no place for "star" stock pickers. It just needs consultants to keep the black boxes running and dealers to carry out the deals. "A black box doesn't have a PR consultant." However, the "advanced active" style has yet to make its mark at Barclays. Over the past three months most of its unit trusts have slipped against their competitors (see table). This is particularly marked in its European Growth unit trust. It grew 1.21 per cent in the three months before the computers took over, but has lost 2.11 per cent in the past quarter. This has pushed it from 25th in its group to 95th. Similarly, the Japan fund has increased losses over the past two quarters from 7.7 per cent to 20.33 per cent.

Mr Woodcock says that both Europe and Japan have been difficult recently and adds that it is too early to make fair comparisons because the conversion to the new style was not complete until the new year. Advanced active has outperformed the index by 2.2 per cent a year since 1992, says BGI.

Until the picture is clearer there is a stay of execution on active fund managers. Bill McQuaker, quantitative strategist at BZW Securities, believes his scientific colleagues are unlikely to overwhelm their active counterparts. "It is inconceivable," he says, "that the whole market is going to go quant. If it did the smart money would go back behind fund managers, looking at economics."

Horlick: worth £1m?



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Bernie Cornfeld, the US financier, was one of the first to launch a fund-of-funds

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The principle behind investing in unit trusts is to reduce risk. Nobody wants to put all of their eggs in one basket, neither do they want to put all of their money in one share. Unit trusts buy lots of shares and spread the risk. If some fail to do well it should not compromise the entire fund, the theory goes.

But what if the fund manager gets it wrong? What happens if he is incompetent or a criminal? What if the company goes belly-up after the disclosure of massive exposure to unheeded securities in the Far East? Then you might wish you had put your faith, and your money, in more than one person.

But there is a simple way that private investors can reduce their reliance on one manager. They can buy a fund-of-funds unit trust that invests in other unit trusts, once again spreading the risk. Buying a fund of funds is a bit like constructing your own fantasy team of fund managers, only it is cheaper because switching between funds is free of capital gains tax within the unit trust.

There are two types of these funds: those restricted to one company's range of funds, and those that can select from the

Fund of funds helps investors who want to spread risk even further, says Gavin Lumsden

entire universe of unit trusts, more than 1,600 in all.

Naturally enough, most companies offering fund of funds prefer to invest in their own in-house range. They can be very successful. The Britannia Managed Portfolio, for instance, has more than doubled a £1,000 investment to £2,103 over the past five years by investing in ten of its unit trusts. Sun Alliance has also flown its flag well with its Portfolio fund of funds adding £840 to £1,000 over five years.

Not all of them are good value, however. The Sun Alliance Campbell Harrison Crucible unit trust would have lost £150 had you put in £1,000 last January. The fund is one of six broker trusts that Sun Alliance operates, in which fund selection and marketing is outsourced to an independent financial adviser, in this case Campbell Harrison of Sheffield. Sun Alliance says it is closing the fund and will not be supporting any more broker-managed trusts in future.

The fund was not alone. Last year 22 of 77 fund of funds failed to make money for their investors, according to HSW, a statistics provider. The fund of funds is no panacea and you still need to take care choosing from whom you buy.

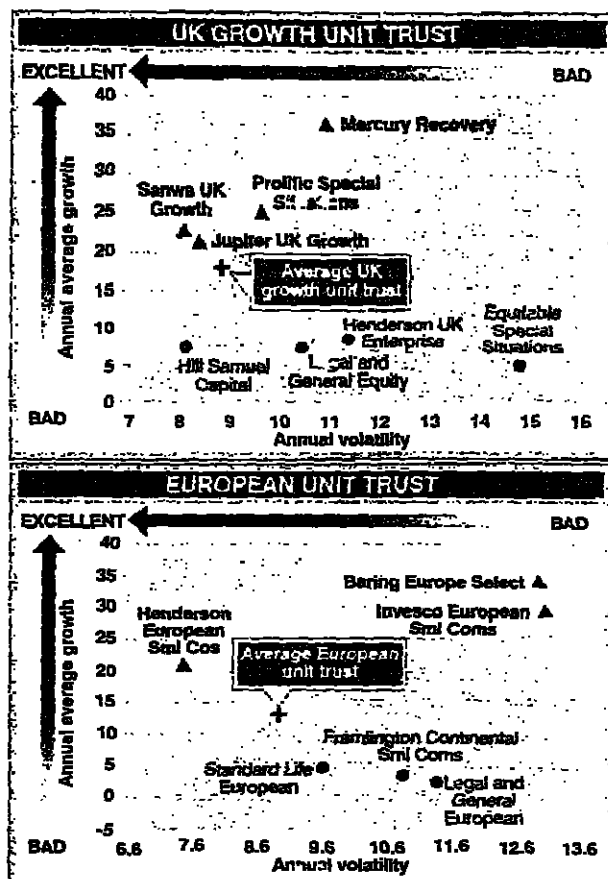
Bernie Cornfeld, the US financier, launched one of the first fund of funds when his company, Investment Overseas Services, collapsed. You should pay particular close attention to how the unit trusts are chosen. If the picker is incompetent then all you have done is displace the risk, not reduce it. And as Tim Miller, marketing director of Portfolio Fund Managers, points out, even good fund management companies have their duff funds.

Portfolio is one of the few companies specialising in fund of funds. As such it is able to choose from more than 1,600 unit trusts across all the management groups. However, it does face the problem of double charging. Investors pay a 5 per cent initial fee and a 1 per cent annual management fee to get into the Portfolio fund, and then pay for the charges of the underlying funds. Mr Miller concedes that this is a problem but says the company strikes bargains when it buys into funds in bulk.

The Portfolio Fund of Funds narrowly beats the Britannia fund over five years, coming top of the sector with a return of £2,110 on a £1,000 lump sum. Next month it launches a European fund of funds.

Portfolio picks its funds using information from Fund Research, a unit trust analysis company. By talking to City fund managers it then determines how much they are investing in different countries. It then chooses 15 to 20 funds that match the asset allocation consensus.

Premier Fund Managers of Guildford takes a more systematic approach in its Selector fund of funds, which it runs in association with Scottish Widows. It follows the asset allocation of the average



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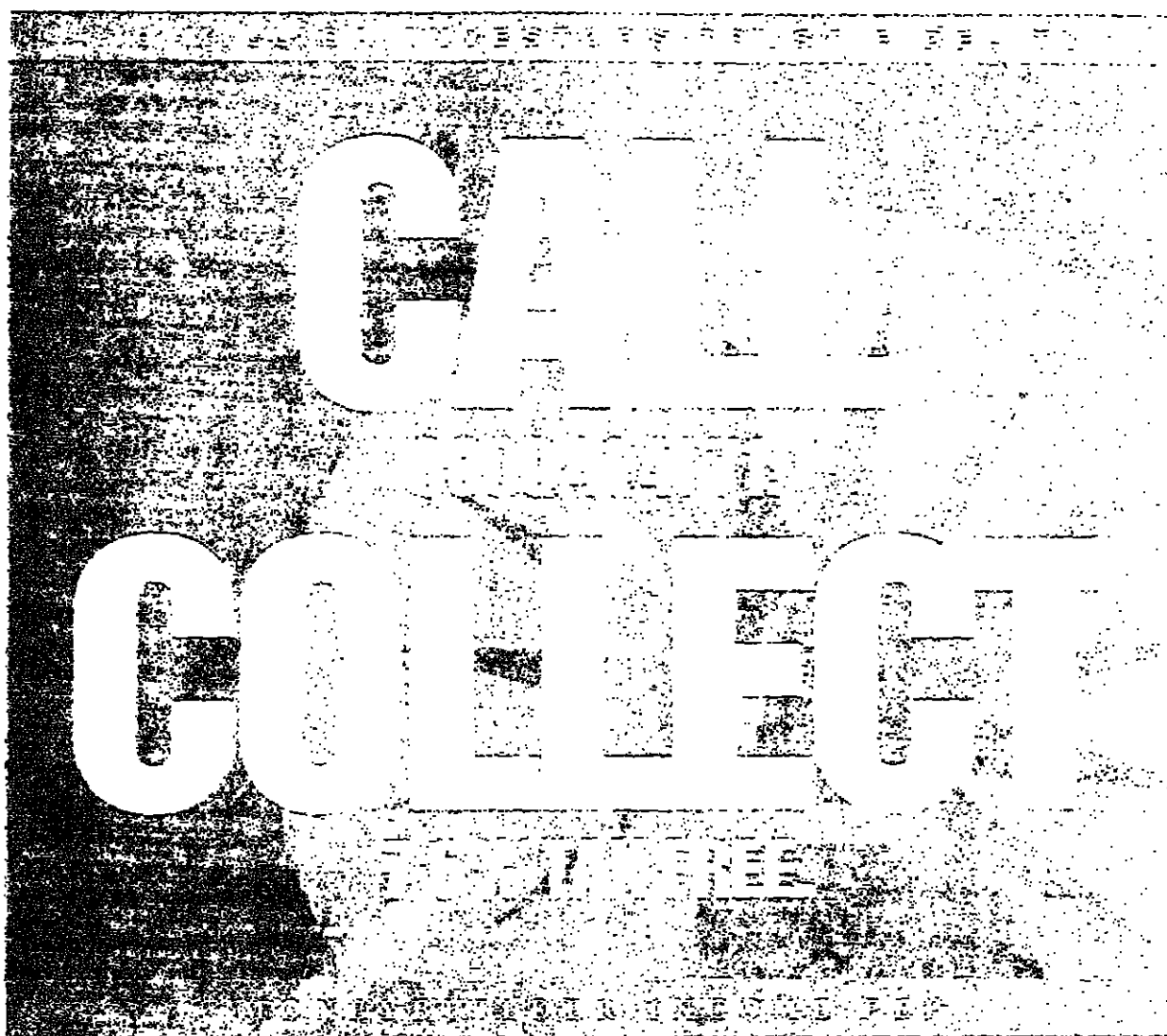
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Paragon	NO	1.00%	3.25%	NO	7.78%	7.78%
Bondway	NO	0.75%	3.25%	NO	7.92%	7.79%

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Sara McConnell and Marianne Curphey try to make sense

Losing out on bonus payouts

The Woolwich and Halifax building societies came under fire again this week as more members were told that they were to be excluded from bonus payments averaging £1,300. One Halifax member stands to lose shares worth more than £4,000 because of wrong advice from his branch.

Engaged and unhelpful helpline have caused confusion and anger, particularly among those trying to establish their right to the shares of relatives who have died. In at least one case, branch staff have given misleading information although they are not supposed to talk about payouts. The rules on successors' rights to free shares are some of the most complex in the daunting transfer documents.

Government intervention nearly two years ago forced societies to relent on their headline stance of refusing to pay bonuses to relatives of dead members where the member had been the first named on a joint account and the second named had not been a member in his or her own right.

After an outcry from widows excluded from Cheltenham & Gloucester payouts after the death of their hus-

bands, usually the first named on the account, a Private Member's Bill was piloted through Parliament by Douglas French, MP for Gloucester.

The Building Societies (Joint Account Holders) Act 1995 preserves the right of second-named members on joint accounts to qualify for bonuses for which a dead first-named member would have qualified. Previously societies had claimed only first-named account holders were members and their rights died with them.

But it is still up to societies to set qualifying dates. These exclude many who would otherwise have qualified but also appear to be a source of confusion to the societies.

Jeff Jeffery, a Halifax member, was concerned that he had not received anything from the society to say that he was entitled to receive his late mother's shares although the society had confirmed that he qualified for a variable bonus in his own right.

His mother died on June 9, 1995, leaving Mr Jeffery as her sole beneficiary. Probate on his mother's estate was resolved by October of that year. The balance on the account would have entitled Mr Jeffery to more than £4,000 of shares.



Poor communication will keep Jeff Jeffery and his wife Ann from a Halifax handout

According to the Halifax's transfer document, shares would go to a deceased member's successor as long as the society was told of a death after November 25, 1994, and before the date of the flotation in July 1997. But Mr Jeffery received no reply to his letter to the conversion information office asking why he had had no

confirmation of his right to the shares. His branch said the qualifying date was not November 25, 1994, but December 12, 1995. This was the date of a press announcement on the rules on successors' rights.

Only after The Times intervened did the Halifax admit that Mr Jeffery did not qualify for the shares on his mother's

account because he had transferred the money from his mother's account into his own. He should have been told to set up a new account, naming himself as executor. The branch had neglected to tell him this although it had been advised by head office to inform members that this was the safest way of ensuring a bonus.

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PIA's tough stance gives hope to pension victims

Hundreds of thousands of people who were misled into pension schemes by the Prudential, Pearl, Legal & General, TSB and Co-operative Insurance. These have some of the biggest backlogs of cases. However, some industry sources have predicted that many cases will still be outstanding by the end of the century. The review was launched in 1994.

Insurers have been told that where necessary they must double the number of staff working on the cases. Although the PIA has been unwilling to comment on these talks it is clear that Ms Rowe wants the process speeded up.

Pension companies were supposed to have completed reviews of all top-priority

cases by December 31 last year, but most are still behind schedule. The cases include miners, teachers, nurses and shop staff advised to buy personal pensions worth a fraction of their company schemes. According to PIA figures, only 7,000 out of 58,000 priority cases have been investigated. There are an estimated 1.5 million victims nationwide.

Last week it emerged that the Prudential, Britain's biggest insurer, had agreed to compensate some of the victims of the mis-selling of an estimated cost of £800,000 after reaching an agreement with the GMB general union in return for an end to litigation. The union has instigated legal action against a number of companies, including Legal & General and TSB, over the mis-selling of pensions.

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Are bond and gilt investments on a sure footing? A new report shows how poorly they have fared against inflation

Balance of the bonds

Are gilts and bonds good value? Fund managers are urging investors to get in on a pre-election bonanza that is boosting the yields and capital growth of debt instruments. Uncertainty over the UK's political intentions towards Europe is also keeping prices low. If European monetary convergence goes ahead it will restrict government borrowing which, combined with interest rate rises

aimed at choking off inflation, could set bond markets on a long-term rally. But are they really such a safe haven from volatile equity markets? A report out this week shows just how disastrously gilts and bonds have fared against inflation. It says that the best performing UK portfolio avoids them like the plague. But is that judgment sound? Is it balanced? We look at the pros and cons.

CASE FOR

It is bargain time in the gilts and bonds market, say leading fund managers. Pre-election uncertainty is keeping yields at attractively high levels, but they are likely to fall once a new government has been chosen.

Stewart Cowley, head of fixed interest at Hill Samuel Asset Management, which manages £8 billion in fixed-interest securities, argues that if Labour is elected it is likely to be more pro-European than the Conservatives. Closer economic co-operation will entail keeping a lid on inflation - essential for healthy bond markets.

He says: "When countries hold Europe at arm's length, as the UK has done, core European markets, such as Germany and France, demand a premium on yields to protect them against policy uncertainties. The UK's yield spreads are 0.5 per cent higher than they need to be compared with Germany. So UK bonds are relatively cheap."

Mr Cowley believes the cost of government borrowing could be reduced by £150 million if an economic convergence policy was pursued more vigorously. And when governments borrow less, bonds become more scarce, so their prices rise and yields fall. This

means that investors who bought now could not only experience attractive yields of between 7 per cent and 8 per cent, but also see the capital value of their bonds go up.

Paul Brain, head of bond investment at Guinness Flight, the fund manager, says that the gilts market is currently attractive. He says: "Now is a good time to buy because nobody likes political uncertainty. We believe a new government is likely to raise interest rates quickly to take the momentum out of a strongly growing economy and thereby choke off inflation. The gilts market will rally after that."

Guinness Flight expects a Labour government to be at least as determined as Conservatives to reduce public spending and borrowing - good news for existing bond holders. It might also make corporate tax changes to encourage companies to spend more on investment, rather than on fat dividends.

This might cast a shadow over the stock market and presents another reason why investors should consider rebalancing their portfolios to include more bonds.

MATTHEW WALL

AGAINST

Investing in bonds is like ordering your money to leap out of the trenches and face the German gunners at the Battle of the Somme. A massacre is inevitable.

Figures released this week by BZW, the investment banking division of Barclays, show just how ruthlessly inflation will annihilate the returns you could expect from gilts. Since 1918, the year the First World War ended, a £100 investment in government debt would have withered to just £3.10 last year.

In stark contrast, equities would have increased the capital worth of your £100 into £786.30. And with the reinvested dividends that all shares pay, this sum would have reached a stupendous £36,528.

Even over shorter periods gilts provide no competition to the might of equities. Gilts have only a 4 per cent chance of beating equities over ten years, and 9 per cent over five years. The probability becomes respectable only over two-year periods, when it increases to 31 per cent.

Gilts are the miserable malcontents of the investment ocean. Minnows that only prosper in the stagnant waters of low economic growth and low inflation. Even then their

average annual return is 12.1 per cent, compared with 10.3 per cent for shares.

Give these greedy fish a healthy dose of GDP growth and above-trend inflation and they start eating into your money.

Gilts are often presented as a safe house for investors. But given these figures it is no surprise that BZW recommends investors not to put any in their UK portfolios. Only the obsessively risk-averse investor should have had any gilts in the past 77 years, and even then only a minute 2 per cent, with the rest in cash. Otherwise, if your risk tolerance was low, average or high, your best bet was to hold absolutely no gilts whatsoever. The introduction of index-linked bonds in 1983 has done little to improve the situation, with the new class underperforming cash, conventional gilts and equities.

The first rule of investment is to make sure you are rewarded for taking some risk. Gilts take no risk, apart from being overtaken by inflation, and offer no rewards. In short, they only suit those with a play-safe, go-nowhere attitude to life.

GAVIN LUMSDEN

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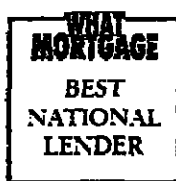
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Other Company	£1,000	£1,000
Other Company	£2,000	£2,000
Other Company	£3,000	£3,000
Other Company	£4,000	£4,000
Other Company	£5,000	£5,000
Other Company	£6,000	£6,000
Other Company	£7,000	£7,000
Other Company	£8,000	£8,000
Other Company	£9,000	£9,000
Other Company	£10,000	£10,000
Average Life Company	£1,000	£1,000



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Higher premiums in the pipeline for homeowners

After the cold snap, Marianne Curphey checks out the extent of damage to the insurance industry

Homeowners and motorists face increases of up to 10 per cent in their insurance premiums this year after the winter freeze cost insurers hundreds of millions of pounds in claims from customers.

The biggest bills the industry faces are for burst pipes in private homes and offices, where the cost of repairing damage often exceeds £50,000.

The Association of British Insurers spent £135,000 this winter alerting householders to the hazards of sub-zero temperatures. Insurance companies laid on hundreds of extra staff to cope with the rush of claims after the big thaw. But even careful householders can fall victim to burst pipes and water tanks if these are old or leaky.

John Burke, a travel agent from London, returned home from a holiday in Tenerife this month to find "a frozen water-fall" coming out of the first floor landing window of his home. The big freeze over Christmas and the new year had caused his upstairs pipes and water tanks to burst, and water began cascading down the stairs.

His insurance company says the damage could cost £25,000 to repair and that six months of work are needed to make the house habitable.

Mr Burke opened his front door to discover ceilings had fallen down in the bedrooms, kitchen and the hallway. "I've never seen such devastation. The house is unrecognisable," he said. Furniture, family photos and carpets are ruined.

Unknown to Mr Burke, the police had broken into his home while he was on holiday after neighbours had heard a huge crash, which turned out to be the sound of the kitchen ceiling collapsing. They turned off gas, electricity and water. Had the flooding continued for a few more days, the foundations could have become waterlogged.

Mr Burke's insurance company, Cornhill, has arranged



Devastated: an estimated £25,000 of repairs are needed to make John Burke's home habitable

for building work to begin and is paying for the family to stay in a hotel.

Burst pipes have been the biggest headache for householders this winter. David Lennan, head of retail insurance for NatWest Insurance Services, said his claims department had seen a 35 per cent rise in calls over the past few weeks.

Damage claims for households last year totalled £400 million and would have been higher but for the fact that the worst of the weather was in Scotland, where the population is less dense. This year the most badly hit area is the South East, which is particularly vulnerable to flooding because of its soft soils.

Mr Lennan said the average household damage claim because of winter weather was £1,500, but some were far higher. "Sustained water damage can cause tremendous problems as plasterboard ceilings deteriorate very quickly and soon collapse."

As a small consolation to people whose homes have been damaged over the winter, loss adjusters should be able to settle claims far more swiftly, thanks to a new data service launched in December by the Meteorological Office. Called Geo Proof, it logs rainfall, wind speeds and temperatures every day.

Trevor May, insurance analyst with Salomon Brothers, said average household premi-

ums could increase by 5 per cent this year, possibly by even more in some areas.

Mr May said: "We will see rises in single figures. However, because insurers can be so precise about risk assessment by looking at bands of only 16 to 32 homes, premiums for houses in low-risk areas could even go down."

Geo Proof will enable claims handlers and loss adjusters to look at weather patterns for more than 650 postcode areas in the UK.

About 3,000 people phone the office every year in an attempt to obtain detailed weather data. Insurers suspect they are trying to collate information to make fraudulent damage claims.

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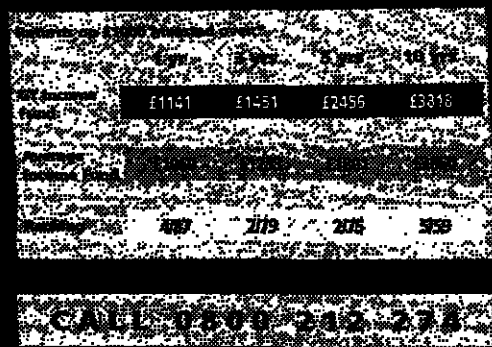
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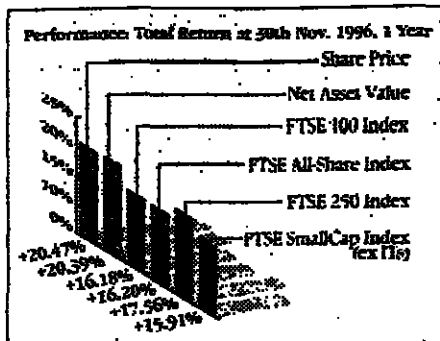
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Caroline Merrell and Lizanne Rose don their skis

How to avoid heading for an expensive fall

Skating may be thrilling. But the fun on the piste can come at a price. One in ten participants will suffer injury while participating in this dangerous pastime.

The mishaps are numerous. Skiers break legs, tear cartilages and rip their cruciate ligaments, the kind of serious injury more commonly suffered by footballers. Skiers can also cause injury to others, in collisions on the mountainside which can result in personal liability claims.

However, many still fly off to the slopes without taking out any insurance against injury. Others will assume that the policy they have purchased as part of their trip is adequate to cover them against any eventuality.

Those who have their own skis can often fail to check the extent of the cover. Some insurers may reject the claim for the loss of skis unless they have been kept in a locked storeroom, locked to a roof rack or kept in a car boot.

A Weekend Money survey of high street travel agents this week (see page 47) showed that anyone taking a skiing trip would routinely be offered insurance, often as part of the holiday deal.

However, the small print of the cover differed from tour operator to tour operator. This means that you should check the small print, especially if you are travelling to the US where the cost of medical treatment is far higher than in Europe. The more dangerous sports, such as snowboarding, are not always included, however, though they do feature in the British Airways Travel Shops policy.

Premiums can also be much higher if you are a senior citizen - United Vacations' cover was double the normal adult rate. Travellers over the age of 75 will have to obtain an individual quote.

This is against the trend for policies covering less active forms of holidays where premiums for pensioners at some companies are beginning to fall (see page 49).

We discovered that most policies will provide some cover against an absence of snow. The exceptions are American Express and British Airways Travel Shops, which will not pay out if the snow



Tara Palmer-Tomkinson skied with the royals this winter

fails to fall. Going Places will require written confirmation of the closure of pistes.

Details of the cover will vary and the small print should be read.

Which?, the Consumers' Association magazine, surveyed 270 policies and recommended you look for the following:

- Medical expenses cover (if involved in an accident or taken ill while away).
- Cover for cancelling your holiday or for cutting it short.
- Personal liability cover (if someone sues you).

Baggage cover if bags are lost or stolen.

Cover for prepaid expenses. The policy should cover the cost of the ski pass and any other expenses paid in advance, in the event of cancellation.

Cover for the cost of mountain rescue.

Cover for the theft of your lift pass.

For example, Direct Travel, one of the companies recommended by Which?, offers a policy covering the following: £10 million of medical cover,

£2 million personal liability cover, £30,000 personal accident cover, for loss of sight or loss of limb, and cover for legal expenses of up to £50,000.

Mark Shaw, Direct Travel manager, said that the high level of legal expenses cover was designed to protect skiers in America, who could easily find themselves the subject of legal action if they accidentally caused injury to another.

He continued: "The biggest area of claim is for medical expenses following injury, and also for repatriation cost."

Mr Shaw said that the cover would include repatriation from the US. The policy also includes £150 to cover the hire cost of ski equipment, and £500 to cover a ski pass and a lift pass.

Other Which? best buys included policies from Europ Assistance, Inter Assurance, Travel Insurance Direct and World Cover Direct.

Cover for a one-week holiday in Europe for one adult will be between £21 and £24; family policies for two adults and two children will cost between £50 and £60.

If you have an annual travel policy, you should make sure that skiing holidays are covered.

For example, the Europ Assistance annual travel insurance offers 17 days of skiing insurance. But the policy no longer covers skiing holidays in the US.

Frederique Pion of Europ Assistance said: "Not every standard ski policy will cover ski equipment while it is in transit."

She added that "no snow" cover was nearly always standard on policies. But she added: "The definition of no snow will vary from policy to policy. Some will say that all types of slopes have to be out of action."

Europ Assistance's policy defines "no snow" as: "If during the trip you are prevented from skiing for more than 24 hours because of total closure of the lift system." Other policies may pay out if all but the nursery slopes are out of action.

Which? says: "When you buy a policy, make sure you disclose anything that might affect your cover, such as health problems."

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*Source: Money 122, during week to ending 20th Nov. 1996. The UK Stockmarket Fund grew by 103.22% with income reinvested.

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Before heading for the slopes skiers should take care to check their insurance cover for themselves and equipment

Thomas Cook

Thomas Cook offers its own fully comprehensive cover, including insurance for ski equipment, plus the standard no-snow guarantee. The premium for one week in Europe is £37.95 and £45.45 for two weeks. Cover for two weeks in the US is £72.85. All brochures in Thomas Cook stipulate that holiday insurance must be taken out. You can either accept the policy that the travel company has arranged, for example, Thomson Holidays uses Home and Overseas insurance, or choose a comparable policy with another company. The premium for a Thomson ski holiday in Europe is £35 for one week (up to nine nights) and £39 for 10-17 nights. For a trip to North America, cover costs £49 for one week and £55 for up to 17 nights. Piste closure is included. Skiers will be given free transport to another ski area if the officially prepared slopes are closed. Claims may be made for each day the slope was closed, if it was not possible to transport skiers elsewhere. The policy covers personal liability of £1 million (£2 million in the US) and medical and emergency expenses of £2 million.

Lunn Poly

Lunn Poly's Ski Care policy for holidays in Europe costs £36.95 for ten days, £41.95 for 17 days and £56.10 for 31 days. Worldwide cover starts at £57.90 for ten days, £67.95 for 17 days and £80.30 for 31 days. There is a reduction of 25 per cent on premiums for children under 12 and children under two on the holiday return. Late are insured free of charge. As well as the £2 million personal liability, there are unlimited medical expenses although a

policy excess applies. The policy covers winter sports equipment as well as piste closure.

Going Places

Going Places is owned by Airtours. Its winter sports insurance for a ski trip to Europe costs £37.95 for seven nights and £42.95 for 14 nights. Worldwide premiums are £66.75 for up to 14 nights.

The policy covers piste closure to a limit of £300. In the event of adverse weather at your booked ski resort and all ski lifts and ski schools being closed, the additional cost of transport/lift passes to an alternative resort will be paid, if no alternative is available, a benefit of up to £30 per day is available. The policy says compensation will not be paid unless you have obtained written confirmation of closure from the ski-lift operators. A limit of £1,500 will be paid on personal possessions and a limit of £10 million on emergency medical and associated expenses. For example, if you suffer an accident while skiing, including in the US, you will be flown home and additional transport and accommodation expenses incurred will be paid.

One of the ski brochures on display in Going Places was for United Vacations' Ski Freedom in the US. United Vacations' insurance premiums are as follows: £55 for nine days, £65 for 10-17 days and £75 for 18-23. The premium for children under 16 is much lower at £28 for nine days, £33 for 10-17 days and £38 for 18-23 days, but for senior citizens the cost increases to £110 for nine days, £130 for 10-17 days and £150 for 18-23 days.

British Airways

British Airways Winter Sports Premiums do not include a no-snow guarantee. In-

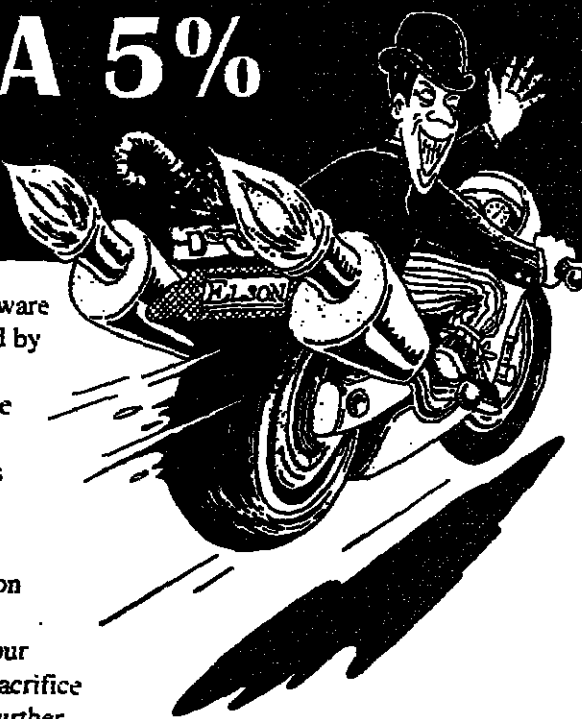
surance prices start at £34 for five days in Europe, £40 for nine days, £46 for 17 days and £58 for up to 31 days. Rates for children under 16 years skiing in Europe are £30 for nine days and £34 for 17 days. Adult worldwide insurance premiums are £96 for 17 days and £128 for 31 days. If you plan to go snowboarding, play ice hockey, or attempt to mono-ski, these activities are included in the policy. Some other dangerous sports will incur a higher premium though, so check when taking out your BA policy. Medical cover is £5 million.

One of the ski brochures available in the BA Travel Shop is for Crystal Holidays. Premiums are £34.50 for one week's cover and £39.50 for two weeks in Europe. For the US and Canada, the cost is £49 for one week and £63.50 for two weeks. Notably, the Crystal Supercare Insurance offers free cover for children aged 15 and under when all adults booking take the Crystal cover. If you decide to book a Crystal holiday but choose another company's insurance you are still able to take out Snow Guarantee/Piste Closure cover for £4.50 a week.

American Express

American Express Winter Sports and Adventure rates do not include a no-snow guarantee. However, off-piste skiing, snowboarding, ice hockey, ski jumping, bobsledding, high-altitude skiing and ski acrobatics are included in the policy. For skiing in Europe, the premium is £30 for up to nine days, £38.50 for 17 days, £42 for 24 days and £43.50 for 31 days. If you are travelling to resorts in the US or Canada, the cost is £51 for nine days, £65 for up to 17 days, £70 for up to 24 days and £84 for up to 31 days. Medical expenses of £1 million will be paid.

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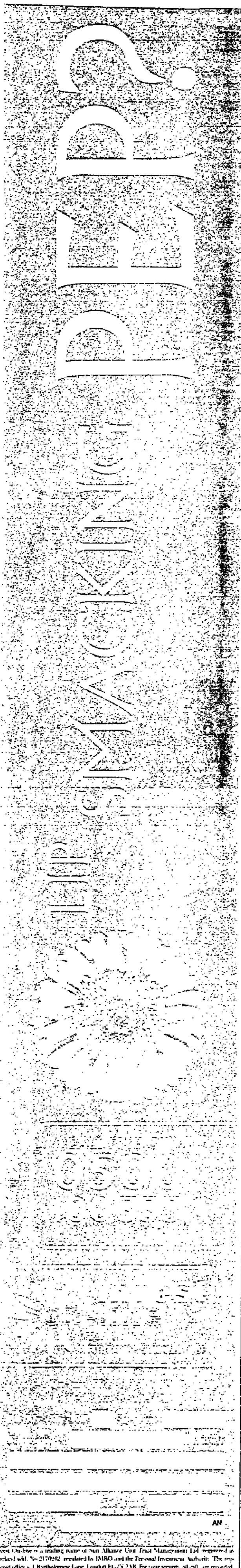
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* SOURCE: HANDBOOK FROM NEWBORN TO NEW WITH NET INCOME INVESTED IN PROLIFIC US BLUE CHIP FUND - 10% OVER FIVE YEARS TO 31.12.96. ** PROJECTED TOTAL GROWTH PERCENTAGE FOR PROLIFIC PREFERENCE AND FIXED INTEREST WHEN HELD AS A PEP IS 9.38% AT 31.12.97. THE INCOME AND GROWTH FROM PROLIFIC HIGH INCOME FUND PLEASE REMEMBER THAT PAST PERFORMANCE IS NOT NECESSARILY A GUIDE TO THE FUTURE. THE VALUE OF INVESTMENTS AND INCOME FROM THEM MAY GO DOWN AS WELL AS UP AND YOU MAY NOT GET BACK THE FULL AMOUNT ORIGINALLY INVESTED. EXCHANGE RATES MAY CAUSE THE VALUE OF INVESTMENTS TO GO UP OR DOWN. THE TAX TREATMENTS OF PEPs MAY BE ALTERED BY FUTURE LEGISLATION ISSUED BY PROLIFIC UNIT TRUST MANAGERS LIMITED. REGULATED BY THE FINANCIAL INVESTMENT AUTHORITY. A MEMBER OF AIFU.

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Our Economics Editor looks at 'a great engine of state'

The nation's formidable Old Lady

ECONOMICS EXPLAINED 4 THE BANK

The Bank of England, also popularly known as the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street, was set up in 1694 and is one of the world's oldest central banks. It started life as a commercial bank but was nationalised in 1946. By then it had already come to behave like a public institution and had built up a formidable reputation. In *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776, Adam Smith wrote that this was no ordinary bank but "a great engine of state".

Bank roles. The Bank is the central bank of the United Kingdom, acting as bank to the Government and the financial system. The Bank sees its three main roles as maintaining the value of the nation's money, ensuring the stability of the financial system and promoting its efficiency and competitiveness. Central banks have become extraordinarily powerful in the modern age as governments have withdrawn from full-scale intervention in their economies and turned to monetary policy as the centrepiece of economic management.

Monetary policy. This is the central business of central bankers. Monetary policy seeks to safeguard the currency and provide a framework for non-inflationary economic growth through the management of credit, the exchange rate and interest rates. Of these three, only the last remains. Controls on the amount of money banks could lend were abandoned in 1971 and attempts to target the exchange rate ended in September 1992, when sterling was ejected from the exchange-rate mechanism.

In the past, the Bank could try to influence the level of sterling through intervention. Using the country's gold and foreign exchange reserves when necessary, it would buy sterling in exchange for foreign currencies when it wanted to stop the pound falling, and sell sterling if it wanted to curb a rise. Nowadays, there is virtually no intervention because government policy is to allow the exchange rate to float freely.

Interest rates and inflation. Interest rates are now the key weapon of monetary policy. The level of rates affects borrowing, consumer demand, investment, the economy's output and ultimately prices. After the 1992 sterling crisis, Norman Lamont, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, set up a new monetary policy framework to replace the ERM. Its centrepiece is an inflation target of 2.5 per cent or less, and rates are now set to achieve that target.

It is the Bank's role to advise the Chancellor



Record run: Montagu Norman is easily the Bank of England's longest-serving Governor, filling the hot seat from 1920 to 1944

on the appropriate level of interest rates. To this end, since 1992, it has published an *Inflation Report* every quarter, containing a detailed analysis of trends in prices and an independent forecast of inflation. Monthly monetary meetings between the Chancellor and the Bank have been put on a formal footing and minutes are published six weeks after each meeting. These gatherings are popularly known as the Ken and Eddie show after Kenneth Clarke and Eddie George, current Chancellor and Governor.

Independence. Because the Bank's advice is now open to public scrutiny, many argue that it has gained influence. But the Government stopped short of giving the Bank total independence from political control, the thorny issue which has exercised Governors from the legendary Montagu Norman, the Bank's longest-serving Governor, to Eddie George

today. Of Britain's main parties, only the Liberal Democrats have committed themselves to giving full independence.

Banking supervision. In 1979 the Bank was given statutory responsibility for authorising and supervising all deposit-taking institutions operating in the United Kingdom, but it had already exercised informal surveillance over many institutions operating in the City of London for many years. The main purpose of this role is to protect depositors with banks against the risk of losing their money. The Barings crisis of 1890, when the highly respected merchant bank was sitting on a pile of worthless Argentine bonds and faced bankruptcy, threw up the issue that remains the central question of banking supervision even today. When is it the Bank's duty, if ever, to rescue companies which deserve to go bust yet in so

doing may create a financial panic that could destabilise the whole financial system? The Bank rescued Barings in the 19th century by borrowing gold from France and Russia, but modern views have turned away from spectacular bail-outs. The Bank stood back when a modern-day Barings was hit by trading losses incurred by Nick Leeson and waited for a private sector purchaser to ride to the rescue.

City cheerleader. The Bank takes a lead in promoting the competitiveness of the City. The Bank is currently spearheading an effort to prepare for the advent of a single European currency. Whether or not Britain joins, the Bank wants business and London's markets ready to compete against rival centres in Paris and Frankfurt.

JANET BUSH

THE BANK'S MOST PUBLIC FACE

The Bank of England is probably most familiar to the public as the name on banknotes. It is the sole issuer of notes in England and Wales. Although Scottish and Northern Irish banks issue their own, they have to be backed pound for pound by Bank of England notes. Notes originally represented deposits of gold coin and bullion piled high in the Bank's vaults. Until 1931, when Britain came off the gold standard, they could be exchanged for gold at a fixed

rate; hence the words "I promise to pay" on the face of notes.

The notes are designed and printed at the Bank's own printing works. The average life of its banknotes ranges from a year for the £5 note to three to four years for a £50 note. To see the sheer beauty and complexity of banknotes through the centuries — as well as piles of glittering gold bars — take a trip to the Bank's own museum in the City.

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Barclays	90 Day Savings	3.90	4.20	4.50	4.70	5.00
Halifax	Solid Gold	3.25	4.00	4.50	4.60	4.60
Lloyds	Investment Account	—	4.30	4.65	5.00	5.40
Midland	Exchequer	4.00	4.35	5.00	5.25	5.75
Nat West	Diamond Reserve	2.91	3.82	4.33	5.12	5.51

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Year	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2108	2109	2110	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2116	2117	2118	2119	2120	2121	2122	2123	2124	2125	2126	2127	2128	2129	2130	2131	2132	2133	2134	2135	2136	2137	2138	2139	2140	2141	2142	2143	2144	2145	2146	2147	2148	2149	2150	2151	2152	2153	2154	2155	2156	2157	2158	2159	2160	2161	2162	2163	2164	2165	2166	2167	2168	2169	2170	2171	2172	2173	2174	2175	2176	2177	2178	2179	2180	2181	2182	2183	2184	2185	2186	2187	2188	2189	2190	2191	2192	2193	2194	2195	2196	2197	2198	2199	2200	2201	2202	2203	2204	2205	2206	2207	2208	2209	2210	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215	2216	2217	2218	2219	2220	2221	2222	2223	2224	2225	2226	2227	2228	2229	2230	2231	2232	2233	2234	2235	2236	2237	2238	2239	2240	2241	2242	2243	2244	2245	2246	2247	2248	2249	2250	2251	2252	2253	2254	2255	2256	2257	2258	2259	2260	2261	2262	2263	2264	2265	2266	2267	2268	2269	2270	2271	2272	2273	2274	2275	2276	2277	2278	2279	2280	2281	2282	2283	2284	2285	2286	2287	2288	2289	2290	2291	2292	2293	2294	2295	2296	2297	2298	2299	2300	2301	2302	2303	2304	2305	2306	2307	2308	2309	2310	2311	2312	2313	2314	2315	2316	2317	2318	2319	2320	2321	2322	2323	2324	2325	2326	2327	2328	2329	2330	2331	2332	2333	2334	2335	2336	2337	2338	2339	2340	2341	2342	2343	2344	2345	2346	2347	2348	2349	2350	2351	2352	2353	2354	2355	2356	2357	2358	2359	2360	2361	2362	2363	2364	2365	2366	2367	2368	2369	2370	2371	2372	2373	2374	2375	2376	2377	2378	2379	2380	2381	2382	2383	2384	2385	2386	2387	2388	2389	2390	2391	2392	2393	2394	2395	2396	2397	2398	2399	2400	2401	2402	2403	2404	2405	2406	2407	2408	2409	2410	2411	2412	2413	2414	2415	2416	2417	2418	2419	2420	2421	2422	2423	2424	2425	2426	2427	2428	2429	2430	2431	2432	2433	2434	2435	2436	2437	2438	2439	2440	2441	2442	2443	2444	2445	2446	2447	2448	2449	2450	2451	2452	2453	2454	2455	2456	2457	2458	2459	2460	2461	2462	2463	2464	2465	2466	2467	2468	2469	2470	2471	2472	2473	2474	2475	2476	2477	2478	2479	2480	2481	2482	2483	2484	2485	2486	2487	2488	2489	2490	2491	2492	2493	2494	2495	2496	2497	2498	2499	2500	2501	2502	2503	2504	2505	2506	2507	2508	2509	2510	2511	2512	2513	2514	2515	2516	2517	2518	2519	2520	2521	2522	2523	2524	2525	2526	2527	2528	2529	2530	2531	2532	2533	2534	2535	2536	2537	2538	2539	2540	2541	2542	2543	2544	2545	2546	2547	2548	2549	2550	2551	2552	2553	2554	2555	2556	2557	2558	2559	2560	2561	2562	2563	2564	2565	2566	2567	2568	2569	2570	2571	2572	2573	2574	2575	2576	2577	2578	2579	2580	2581	2582	2583	2584	2585	2586	2587	2588	2589	2590	2591	2592	2593	2594	2595	2596	2597	2598	2599	2600	2601	2602	2603	2604	2605	2606	2607	2608	2609	2610	2611	2612	2613	2614	2615	2616	2617	2618	2619	2620	2621	2622	2623	2624	2625	2626	2627	2628	2629	2630	2631	2632	2633	2634	2635	2636	2637	2638	2639	2640	2641	2642	2643	2644	2645	2646	2647	2648	2649	2650	2651	2652	2653	2654	2655	2656	2657	2658	2659	2660	2661	2662	2663	2664	2665	2666	2667	2668	2669	2670	2671	2672	2673	2674	2675	2676	2677	2678	2679	2680	2681	2682	2683	2684	2685	2686	2687	2688	2689	2690	2691	2692	2693	2694	2695	2696	2697	2698	2699	2700	2701	2702	2703	2704	2705	2706	2707	2708	2709	2710	2711	2712	2713	2714	2715	2716	2717	2718	2719	2720	2721	2722	2723	2724	2725	2726	2727	2728	2729	2730	2731	2732	2733	2734	2735	2736	2737	2738	2739	2740	2741	2742	2743	2744	2745	2746	2747	2748	2749	2750	2751	2752	2753	2754	2755	2756	2757	2758	2759	2760	2761	2762	2763	2764	2765	2766	2767	2768	2769	2770	2771	2772	2773	2774	2775	2776	2777	2778	2779	2780	2781	2782	2783	2784	2785	2786	2787	2788	2789	2790	2791	2792	2793	2794	2795	2796	2797	2798	2799	2800	2801	2802	2803	2804	2805	2806	2807	2808	2809	2810	2811	2812	2813	2814	2815	2816	2817	2818	2819	2820	2821	2822	2823	2824	2825	2826	2827	2828	2829	2830	2831	2832	2833	2834	2835	2836	2837	2838	2839	2840	2841	2842	2843	2844	2845	2846	2847	2848	2849	2850	2851	2852	2853	2854	2855	2856	2857	2858	2859	2860	2861	2862	2863	2864	2865	2866	2867	2868	2869	2870	2871	2872	2873	2874	2875	2876	2877	2878	2879	2880	2881	2882	2883	2884	2885	2886	2887	2888	2889	2890	2891	2892	2893	2894	2895	2896	2897	2898	2899	2900	2901	2902	2903	2904	2905	2906	2907	2908	2909	2910	2911	2912	2913	2914	2915	2916	2917	2918	2919	2920	2921	2922	2923	2924	2925	2926	2927	2928	2929	2930	2931	2932	2933	2934	2935	2936	2937	2938	2939	2940	2941	2942	2943	2944	2945	2946	2947	2948	2949	2950	2951	2952	2953	2954	2955	2956	2957	2958	2959	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BRITISH FUNDS									
1996/97		Stock	Price	±	kgd	Gm pd	1996/97		
Index	Low						High	Low	
SHORTS (under 5 years)									
101%*	100%	Trust 7% 1987	100%		6.97	6.18	12%	115%	
102%*	100%	Trust 8% 1987	100%		10.42	5.93			
116%*	100%	Trust 9% 1987	100%		8.11	6.23	LONGS (over		
116%*	100%	Trust 10% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	10%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 11% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	12%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 12% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	14%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 13% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	16%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 14% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	18%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 15% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	20%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 16% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	22%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 17% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	24%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 18% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	26%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 19% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	28%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 20% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	30%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 21% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	32%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 22% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	34%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 23% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	36%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 24% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	38%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 25% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	40%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 26% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	42%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 27% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	44%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 28% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	46%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 29% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	48%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 30% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	50%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 31% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	52%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 32% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	54%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 33% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	56%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 34% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	58%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 35% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	60%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 36% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	62%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 37% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	64%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 38% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	66%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 39% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	68%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 40% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	70%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 41% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	72%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 42% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	74%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 43% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	76%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 44% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	78%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 45% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	80%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 46% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	82%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 47% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	84%	115%	
116%*	100%	Trust 48% 1987	100%		8.42	6.23	86%	115%	
11									

هكذا من الأصل

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: NATION WILLS GREEN BAY TO BEAT NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS



Parcells, the Patriots coach, discusses tactics with Bledsoe, the quarterback, during final practice for the Super Bowl in New Orleans tomorrow.

Packers chase American dream

FROM OLIVER HOLMES
IN NEW ORLEANS

BRIAN LEE is blind now but he has a favourite image stored up in his mind's eye. Every night, between numbers at the Old Absinthe House Bar on Bourbon Street this week, he has hushed his blues band and shared the memory with the lucky few who have squeezed into the darkness before the queues start outside the door.

"There are probably none of you ever heard of Tobin Roat," he says, "none of you who could tell me what position he played. Well, he was the QB for the Packers back in the Fifties. He could run, he could throw, he could do everything, baby." His long beard twitches and then the harmonica starts to wail.

They have existed on memories like that for 30 years now, Green Bay Packers, feasting in particular on the legend of Vince Lombardi, the coach who led them to victory in the first two Super Bowls — in 1967 and 1968. That linked their name forever to the

golden age of the sport, a time when athletic ability and honest endeavour on the field counted for more than image and trash-talking.

Lombardi was an intensely-driven disciplinarian with something of the aura of Bill Shankly, a coach who had an attitude to the pursuit of victory similar to that of the revered Liverpool manager. "Winning is not everything," he once said. "It is the only thing." Such was his reputation that the National Football League (NFL) named the Super Bowl trophy after him when he died.

Tomorrow night, here at the Louisiana Superdome in the heart of the city, the Packers will have a golden chance to win that trophy for the first time. Super Bowl XXXI is likely to be closer-fought than many of its recent predecessors but Green Bay are still short-priced favourites to overcome New England Patriots and extend the domination of the National Football Conference to a 13-year stretch.

Everyone in the United States bar the Patriots fans



The reality, of course, is not quite the same and the Packers' whiter-than-white image was tarnished when their quarterback, Brett Favre, admitted before the start of last season that he was undergoing treatment for addiction to painkillers.

Still, when that is compared with the seedy antics of Dallas Cowboys players, the succession of scandals they have brought upon themselves in the past two years, the drug convictions and the battery charges, it is little wonder that the country is searching around for a more worthy bearer for the accolade of "America's Team".

Favre, a gritty, charismatic leader of men, is fast becoming America's hero, too. If he can steady himself at the beginning of tomorrow's game, a time when he is notoriously inconsistent and over-excitabile, the Packers should subdue the Patriots, whose only other appearance in a Super Bowl was here in 1996, when they were routed 46-10 by Chicago Bears.

tion now that Bill Parcells, the former coach of New York Giants, is at the helm and, if they shock the Packers, he will become the first man in the history of the sport to lead two different teams to Super Bowl victories — and that despite a bitter battle with the Patriots' owner, Bob Kraft, that prompted a Boston newspaper to print a picture of them both on its back page yesterday underneath the headline: The Big Uneasy.

With the Giants, Parcells relied on a formidable defense, but his best weapons with the Patriots are in his offense. Apart from Drew Bledsoe, the leader of a new generation of young quarterbacks, the Patriots have got one of the best wide receivers in the game in the rookie, Terry Glenn, a fine tight end in Ben Coates and a mercurial running back in Curtis Martin.

If Bledsoe and Favre are both in top form it will be like watching two boxers going at it toe-to-toe. Whatever the result, it is unlikely to be a low-scoring game.

In Xanadu did Wigan a stately ski-jump decree

SIMON BARNES

IT IS with a hand trembling with delight and disbelief that I smite the keyboard for this week's offering. For I learn, to my inexpressible delight that — after a decade and more of championing from this column — planning permission has at last been given for the first British ski-jump.

It took a place as bold as Wigan to give support to the idea. Where local authorities all over Britain have held back, Wigan alone march forward. Permission has been granted for a ski-jumping hill as part of the huge "Xanadu" ski centre project.

A 60-metre hill would be big enough for international competition among the Lowlander jumping nations; this would be too daunting for beginners and there are hopes for hills of 25 and 40 metres as well. Wigan has always been a centre for stout-hearted sporting people and the Wigan ski-jump at Xanadu would extend that tradition in a wonderful fashion: a stately pleasure-dome for the young eagles.

All out of love

All America has thrilled to the story of Michael Volpe, the alienated baseball fan. Volpe, a person formerly devoted to San Francisco Giants, withdrew his support from the club when they traded the slugger, Matt Williams to Chicago White Sox. Volpe packed up three decades worth of Giants memorabilia and posted it back to the club, with the message "I am divorcing you from my baseball life." He then wrote to all the other 27 major league baseball teams, offering to be their fan and asking why he should support their club.

This has provoked national debate, and many responses. John Maroon, PR man at Baltimore Orioles, had Volpe driven from his home in Virginia to the ball park, gave him lunch and a tour of the stadium. Perhaps it is the most rational approach to the concept of being a fan yet devised: what's in it for me?

Getting shirty

Getting Shirty
The hideous new Australia rugby union jersey, abandoning the famous gold, continues to cause dismay. Vince Sherry, of Reebok, the company that has introduced the new shirt for reasons not



On Saturday:

unadjacent to money, explained that market research had shown the most popular colours for leisurewear are black, white and blue.

Gold, he said, was way down the list, and that explains why the most popular rugby shirts are those of New Zealand, France and England. "The retention of the gold jumper was not commercially viable."

Clearly, the first question to ask when considering any sporting outfit is: does it look all right with jeans? That is why we got the unspeakable grey England football strip. Oh, and a new-style Aussie shirt costs A\$120.

Hale and hearty

Fat goalie round-up: José Luis Chilavert, the Paraguayan international, returning to his Argentinian club Vélez Sarsfield, was criticised in the deliciously-named *Olé* magazine for an excess of adipose tissue. Chilavert solved the problem by seeking out the reporter, one Juan Pablo Méndez, and whacking him. Meanwhile, René Higuita, who retired

Rene Filgula, who feared



COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND FEATURES

[illegible]

RACING: ONE MAN CAN DOMINATE AT CHELTENHAM AS RICHARDS LINES UP BIG-RACE TREBLE

Greystoke chasers to collect rich pickings

BY RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

GORDON Richards can complete a remarkable big-race treble this afternoon and in the process offer himself hope of ending a personal Cheltenham Festival hoodoo.

One Man and Addington Boy will be out to further their Gold Cup claims at Cheltenham, while General Command seeks to confirm his status as a progressive handicapper in the day's most valuable chase at Doncaster, and all three Greystoke runners are likely to start favourite.

Despite being one of the leading jumping trainers, Richards has enjoyed only three winners at the Cheltenham Festival.

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: LEAR JET
(1.35 Cheltenham)
Next best: Star Rage
(4.30 Cheltenham)

ham Festival — the last victory coming ten years ago. He would love dearly to put the record straight.

One Man, beaten upwards of 30 lengths on the three previous occasions he has run at Cheltenham, should be able to put the past behind him as he faces just three rivals in the Pillar Property Investments Chase (3.20). "If he cannot do his job tomorrow, you would have to be disappointed. If he doesn't win, I would have to put it down to Cheltenham. Let's hope he answers the questions. He's been working since the weather broke and I had him ready to run more than a week ago," Richards said yesterday.

While One Man will not be a betting proposition, it is hard to make out a case for his rivals, especially as the two 11-year-olds, Barton Bank and



One Man has a fine chance of gaining his first Cheltenham success today in the Pillar Property Investments Chase. Photograph: David Giles

Yorkshire Gale, hail from yards not in the best of form. Martonick has not won a race since April 1994.

Although Addington Boy faces a tougher task in the Ladbroke Trophy Handicap (2.10), the Tripleprint Gold Cup winner still looks ahead of the handicapper. The nine-year-old previously lost out to Challenger Du Luc in the Murphy's Gold Cup over course and distance, having slipped on the home turn. With ground conditions and a

3lb pull in the weights in his favour, he should gain revenge today and advertise his Festival claims.

Richards is particularly fond of General Command, undefeated in three starts this term, and he looks capable of giving weight away to his rivals in the Pertemps Great Yorkshire Chase (3.00) at Doncaster. Golden Spinner rates the main danger.

Away from the gaze of the television cameras, there are several tempting betting prop-

ositions. Star Rage, who did this column a big favour in the County Hurdle last year, is at his best in a strongly-run race on a track with a stiff finish. Jimmy Harris's tough dual-purpose campaigner, who ran creditably on the Lingfield all-weather on Tuesday, has everything in his favour in the DJ Equine Handicap Hurdle (4.30) at Cheltenham.

Celestial Choir, another dual-purpose horse, looks to have been let in on a very favourable margin for her

handicap debut over hurdles in the Bessacarr Handicap Hurdle (1.20) at Doncaster. Considered a Champion Hurdle possibility last term, she won easily at Ayr before finishing an excellent third in the Mysel at Haydock and a reproduction of that effort would be more than good enough to win today.

Bob Jones paid 9,000 guineas for the former Paul Cole-trained Lear Jet last September and from the moment the colt jumped a hurdle

at home, he knew it was money well spent. "He's a brilliant jumper," the Newmarket trainer said yesterday.

On his debut at Ascot, Lear Jet jumped superbly and he looks a value proposition in the Finesse Four-Year-Old Hurdle at Cheltenham (1.35) where Shooting Light is likely to be favourite. Jones sent out Le Teteu to beat Hurricane Lamp at Doncaster yesterday, and that victory has provided added encouragement for this afternoon.

CHELTENHAM

THUNDERER
1.00 Daraydan
1.35 Shooting Light
2.10 Addington Boy
2.45 Pridwell
3.20 One Man
3.55 Imperial Vintage
4.30 Star Rage

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 1.00 HAY DANCE.

GUIDE TO OUR IN-LINE RACECARD

101 113143 GOOD TIMES 13 (B.F.S.) (M.D. Robinson) 8 Hail 13-4. B West (7) 88
Raced number. Star-figure form (F = first, P = pulled up, U = unseated rider, B = brought down, S = stayed up, R = retired, D = disqualified). Horse's name (B.F.S. = best of five starts, M.D. = most of day, Hail = hail, B = best, West = west, 88 = 88).
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FOOTBALL

Six-shooters aim to take game into a new arena

When tomorrow's FA Cup tie against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge is over, the Liverpool first-team squad will fly direct to Amsterdam to begin an odyssey very different from any other English club. While Liverpool are away, Manchester United, and possibly Arsenal, could usurp them at the top of the FA Carling Premiership; but neither will keep such excited company, or figure in such a setting, as Liverpool.

Steve McManaman, John Barnes and company are to play Ajax, AC Milan, and Rangers in an inaugural European 6ix's, under the sliding roof of the new £70 million Amsterdam Arena in a concept devised by Craig Johnston and headed by Johan Cruyff. The teams will play six-a-side football on real grass, and in a format that takes the quick movement and high skills of the indoor game with live appearances from popular musicians.

The venture is coated with commercialism, or at least with speculation, in which Johnston, the former Australia and Liverpool winger, says he has sold his other business interests, in sport and television, and even sold his Harley Davidson to finance the project.

Despite all the showbiz trappings, though, pure football is the aim: McManaman can take on Maldini, and Roberto Baggio and John Barnes can show their touches; Cruyff lends his name and his technical expertise to the venture because he believes that the modern game desperately requires a concentration on ball skill, as opposed to physical athleticism.

Though the first European event is held in Cruyff's home city, and though Ajax is about to announce a successor to Louis van Gaal as coach, the assumption that Cruyff will return to his roots is unfounded. Instead, Morten Olsen, the former Denmark international, will join Ajax this summer. Cruyff is happy out of management at the moment, involved in the hit with 6ix's, and says that, just as he helped

ROB HUGHES



Weekend View

to found the Ajax youth school on the principles of teaching real skills to schoolboys, he believes the small-sided game is "the most effective way to recapture the lost talents of street soccer."

With commercialism mixing with idealism in the Arena on Monday and Tuesday, as four of the Continent's elite show their paces, the gathering of yet more figureheads of the leading clubs points to an acceleration towards the much-vaunted European Super League. Franz Beckenbauer, the president of Bayern Munich, Roberto Benigni, the president of Juventus, and their counterparts from Real Madrid and Paris Saint-Germain will all be studying this futuristic tournament.

And where football people, entrepreneurs, industrialists and sponsors come together, you can be sure that the next element towards a breakaway elite will be advanced. There will be six of the Premiership clubs represented by their managers, and some of them, perhaps thinking at the outset that Liverpool are taking a short winter break, will see the serious and financial implications behind it. For a start, each of the four clubs involved next week receives £125,000 for bringing its stars; they can win as much again in a tournament that, without jeopardising the players unduly, is intended to have a competitive edge.

Curiously, the tournament received most publicity in

Holland because of the kind of legal spat that becomes inevitable where high finance meets sport. Right to the eleventh hour, Philips, the electrical giant based in Eindhoven that has a financial stake in the Arena, threatened court action against the other partners in the new stadium.

This was because Philips, having earlier rejected an opportunity to sponsor the 6ix's, objected to Sony, its Japanese rival, projecting its name through the event. Consequently, Philips, by making its objection so public, has helped to sell the first 25,000 tickets towards the promoters' plan for at least 40,000, in the Arena over the two nights.

In some ways, Johnston's idea reinvents the wheel — it is football as we know it with a new spin. Having been responsible, while a Liverpool player, for *Anfield Rap*, the restless Johnston travelled the world and wondered why small-sided leagues have not sprouted as an alternative to uneconomic reserve leagues.

He came to two main conclusions — the different formats involved in the United States, Germany, Austria, Spain and England gave a fractured appearance to the notion, and the different surfaces, Astroturf, clay or wood, together with perimeter boards, meant a risk of injuries that deterred managers.

Johnston's partners, having to restrain his ebullience and trying to guide his pioneering but erratic themes, have maintained the integrity of football, but recognised the attraction of music and technology.

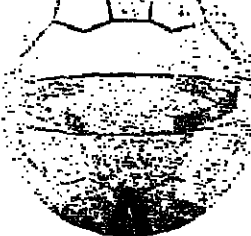
Thus, when at 8pm on Tuesday, Liverpool and Ajax wait in the wings for the first game of the night, the lights will go down, the big screen will replay highlights from 1966 — when Ajax beat Bill Shankly's Liverpool side 5-1 — and the Liverpool anthem, *You'll Never Walk Alone*, will fill the stadium.

When the lights come on, the audience will find Gerry Marsden of Gerry and The Pacemakers playing live for them. Setting the pace, at the heart of Europe.

Family man mixing amid the glitterati

EDDIE NEWTON

THE FACE OF FOOTBALL



By Russell Kempson

Cassius Newton bounces playfully on his father's knee, mischievously tugging at his shirt and punching him, gently yet provocatively, on the chin. Dad cradles him close, barely noticing. Cassius, three after 20 minutes, as four-year-olds do, and wanders off to seek alternative entertainment. Dad glances after him, sneaking a paternal glance, and carries on chatting.

Eddie Newton, the Chelsea midfielder player, has faced many more fearsome opponents, indulged in much more demanding duels, and come out winning. Hard but fair. When Liverpool play at Stamford Bridge tomorrow, in the fourth round of the FA Cup, he will guard his territory jealously and appear not a patch out of place amid the continental glitterati.

In the company of Cassius, he mellowed, indulging his son's whims without a hint of irritation apart from a few quick, calming words. "I make sure I'm there for him the whole time," Newton said. "He's a bit of a daddy's boy, he tries to copy everything I do, but he's great."

"I've enjoyed watching him develop, from when he was a baby to now, and I enjoy taking him to school. I remember his first day, he wasn't sure about it and started crying. Now, I take him in and he says: 'Bye, dad' — and he's gone."

Newton Jr was named after Cassius Clay, later to become Muhammad Ali, the former world heavyweight boxing champion. "I liked the name, anyway, but Ali was my hero," Newton said. "I admired him for many reasons but particularly for the way he stood up for his beliefs."

The United States in the



Newton has flourished at Chelsea under the guidance of first Hoddle and then Gullit

Sixties was very racist but he still went to places where black men would fear to tread. He went to universities in the deep South, where he was surrounded by hundreds of white people, and stood up and said: 'You are doing wrong. This is not the way God wants us to carry on. You shouldn't judge people by the colour of their skin'.

"Even now, even though he's suffering from Parkinson's disease, it doesn't stop him. He's still out there, still visiting people, still involved with charities. He's one hell of a man."

Newton, 25, is cautious at

first acquaintance. Yet he warms quickly, talking articulately and knowledgeably on a variety of subjects. Born in Hammersmith — his mother, Beverly, is Jamaican, his father, Paul, is Nigerian — he attended Cardinal Vaughan School in Kensington. BMX bike racing, a favoured pastime, was swiftly replaced.

"I had a great childhood and a good education but football was always No 1," he said. "I'd sometimes play ten games in two weeks and my mum would have to wake up in the middle of the night and help me. I'd get cramp in my

calves and in my thighs because I played so often."

Chelsea were impressed. Yet at 19, he was farmed out to Cardiff City for three months on loan. "I was a bit of a cocky lad," he recalled. "I thought I should have been in the first team." Ian Porterfield, then the manager, sent him away to learn his trade and he returned, suitably chastened, to score on his Chelsea debut, as a substitute, against Everton at Goodison Park, on the final day of the 1991-92 season.

It was the arrival of Glenn Hoddle at Stamford Bridge, a year later, that initiated New-

ton's now established anchor role in midfield. "Glenn told me: 'You're not outstanding at anything but you're very good at everything. You can tackle, you're good in the air and you read the game well. I've got the perfect position for you — the holding slot in front of the back four. I want you to dictate, get the ball, play it, set everything up, keep it all ticking over, but never get in front of the ball. Whenever it is, I want you behind it.'" Newton obeyed — as Hoddle preached the patient, beautiful game — and flourished.

In February last year he broke his right leg in a collision with Kevin Hitchcock, the Chelsea goalkeeper, when playing against West Ham United. He reappeared three months ago, by which time Hoddle had left to coach England. Ruud Gullit was player-manager and the Italians, Vialli and Di Matteo, plus Leboeuf, the Frenchman, had arrived at the Bridge. Zola, a third Italian, soon joined them.

"I've never been worried about competition," Newton said. "I've always been fairly self-confident and believed in myself. Anyway, the camaraderie at the club is brilliant. It doesn't matter whether you're a youngster or a senior, whether you've played in a national team or won this cup or that, everyone mixes together."

Gullit's approach is almost identical to Hoddle's, with subtle variations. Nice and easy, yet serious at the business end. "When you're training or playing, there's no messing around," Newton said. "You do it properly, you get your work done. Ruud told everyone at the start of the season that if they weren't doing it, international or youth team player, they wouldn't play. He's kept to that, everyone knows where they stand."

Newton is doing it, consistently. If not, he can seek satisfaction elsewhere — from the soccer schools he organises, from his love of ragga, soul and swing, from playing with his son. Or from his collection of Muhammad Ali videos.

"If I missed a pick-me-up, I watch the tapes," he said. "I never get bored with them, they always give me a lift — to go out and get what I want, to go as far as I can, to be the best I can. Ali inspires me. He always will."

Wray reconsiders Forest takeover

By Russell Kempson and David Maddock

ATTEMPTS to take over Nottingham Forest, the troubled FA Carling Premiership club, took another twist yesterday. The consortium led by Nigel Wray, the city financier and owner of Saracens rugby union club, is now reassessing whether it wants to continue bidding after the Forest board of directors announced a delay in holding the next emergency general meeting.

Wray's group has offered a £24 million package, on the condition that it is voted on by February 13. However, Forest have arranged the next meeting of shareholders for February 24.

Nina Gardiner, a spokeswoman for the consortium, said: "Our document expires on February 13 and we now have to decide whether we will extend the deadline for the proposals we have put forward to Forest." At the last emergency meeting, earlier this month, shareholders rejected the rescue plans put forward by Sandy Anderson, a wealthy local businessman.

Middlesbrough have appealed to the Football Association against the three-point penalty, imposed by the FA Premier League, for failing to play the league fixture against Blackburn Rovers at Ewood Park last month. At the time, Middlesbrough — now bottom of the FA Carling Premiership — claimed they could not field a side because 23 players were either injured, ill or suspended.

A three-man appeal board is to be set up by the FA. "It is the first time we have had to form a commission of this nature but it will be done as soon as possible," an FA spokesman said yesterday.

Middlesbrough were also fined £50,000 and ordered to pay Blackburn compensation after calling off the game, unilaterally, with barely 24 hours' notice.

Steve Gibson, the Middlesbrough chairman, described the ruling as "profoundly unjust" and said that he would be consulting the club's legal advisers.

West Ham United also have their problems. Supporters are to brandish red cards at the board of directors this afternoon, when Wrexham visit Upton Park in an FA Cup third-round replay, in an effort to prompt it into negotiations with Michael Tabor, a multimillionaire former bookmaker and West Ham fan.

Tabor has £30 million available to finance the club but claims that he has been ignored by the board. Gary Firminger, editor of *Over Land and Sea*, the West Ham fanzine, said: "There is no way you cannot support Tabor when you are lying third from bottom of the table. We are not saying the board has to go, but they have to open a dialogue with Tabor."

Liverpool's visit to Stamford Bridge tomorrow promises something special in a fragmented and distinctly untimely FA Cup fourth round. John Barnes returns for Liverpool, the beaten finalists last season, after recovering from a hamstring strain and he has no doubts from where Chelsea's danger will emanate.

"[Gianfranco] Zola is an exceptional talent and I really don't think we've ever seen anyone like him in England before," Barnes said. "He has given Chelsea a new dimension and made them a real threat. He is his country's [Italy's] best talent."

Manchester United also welcome a fresh face for their all-Premiership contest at Old Trafford with Wimbledon, but one not nearly as experienced as Barnes. Chris Casper, son of Frank Casper, the former Burnley player, will make only his fourth full senior appearance as a central defensive replacement for the injured Ronnie Johnson.

"I will be nervous but I would think there is something seriously wrong if I wasn't," Casper, 21, said. "I was in the same youth team as the other young lads who went into the first team and it has been frustrating that I have not followed, so this game cannot come quickly enough."

Waddle still playing to the crowd

David Maddock on the former England wing relishing a return to centre stage

He has been there, done it, missed the penalty. So why is Chris Waddle, perhaps the most talented footballer of his generation, scratching a living at the foot of the Nationwide League first division with Bradford City?

It is a question that puts him on the defensive, but that is an alien concept to Waddle. "Thirty-six is an age, not an illness. I'm still enjoying playing, and I still feel I'm doing myself justice. I feel very fit. I don't feel any different to the way I did a few years ago. I don't think this is my last season — I now feel I could play on for a couple more years."

Waddle, once of Marseilles and England, has spent the past four months in the footballing wings as his career has started to wind down, first with Falkirk, then Bradford. Centre stage beckons once more this afternoon, though, with a visit to Everton in the fourth round of the FA Cup.

It will be a brief moment, a reminder of the maverick, nonchalant skills that were cultivated in England and blossomed, spectacularly, in France. There is every chance that Everton will be on the receiving end of his relatively undiminished talents, and that is an uneasy prospect for an FA Carling Premiership side which has lost its last five league matches.

Waddle continues at this lower level because he enjoys playing, cannot give it up, and because no Premiership club was interested in him when he was freed by Sheffield Wed-

nesday. This is a puzzle not just to those who have seen him playing for Bradford this season, but to the player himself.

"A lot of people have asked why and I don't know myself really," he mused. "I suppose people knew I fancy being a manager one day, and I had an ankle operation at the start of the season and that maybe scared people off, too."

Waddle is not a malicious man and is generally as laid-back off the field as on it. But he is an experienced professional with strong opinions on the game, and he suspects that may have been an even bigger reason than his age for

the lack of interest. Yet he resents accusations that he caused problems for David Platt, the Wednesday manager, who released him, just as he resents the treatment he received from Platt.

"When David Platt came to Sheffield Wednesday, I don't think I was his cup of tea. I always got the impression he didn't want me. When he got the opportunity, he got rid of me. I'm not a troublemaker. I have my opinions and I've still got a lot to offer. At the end of the day I was asked questions by a manager and I gave straight answers."

"I had four great years there, but the sad part was the way Platt obviously said 'I



Waddle's days with Sheffield Wednesday ended unhappily

Sturrock has taste of things to come

By Kevin McCarron

SUCCESS is supposed to act as a form of steroid, making a man's nostrils flare and his muscles bulge. All of which makes Sturrock's mood, as they prepare to meet Rangers in the third round of the Tennent's Scottish Cup, at Ibrox this afternoon, a little puzzling. The Perth club ought to have every reason to feel a little brash.

Having lost just three matches this season, they lead the Bell's Scottish League first division by 11 points and promotion, usually a most elusive prize, is virtually in their possession already. Paul Sturrock, St Johnstone's manager, is swift to argue, though, that even great progress can carry most Scottish teams only so far.

"I believe Celtic and Rangers will win the league for ever more," he said, recognising the overwhelming wealth of the Old Firm, in a week that has seen the Ibrox club raise £40 million of fresh investment from Joe Lewis, the Bahamas-based businessman. One would not guess, either, that he is filled with hope over a single meeting with Rangers today.

"This will be a taste of what we can experience if we get promoted, but a visit to Ibrox might not be the kind of taste you want too often," Sturrock said. The difficulties, to be faced there, are, indeed, substantial and, with Brian Laudrup suffering with injury and flu, Rangers will probably be able to rest him and allow Sebastian Rozental, their new £4 million signing, to start his first match for the club.

Sturrock talks, too, of the difficulty of devising a strategy for this tie. His side cannot take too many risks, since Rangers are most effective as a counter-attacking team, but the St Johnstone manager appreciates that the Scottish Cup holders are equipped, if need be, to wear down defensive opponents through a process of attrition.

It would, nonetheless, be folly to assume that Sturrock will make his way to Ibrox

merely to deliver an unconditional surrender. He may describe his record in cup football as "abysmal", but the deprecation of himself and his side, is delivered for tactical reasons.

His players are being reminded that promotion is their principal task and Sturrock is also attempting to relieve them of the inherent stress of a match against Rangers at Ibrox. Since St Johnstone are evidently too strong for the first division, it must be assumed that there is a chance of an interesting contest, as long as the loss of an early goal is avoided.

Sturrock still does not know whether his full backs, John McQuillan and Callum Davidson, will be fit to take part. No matter who is involved, however, Ibrox is not really likely to witness the removal of a premier division club from the Scottish Cup. Those with a ghoulish relish of the sight of the mighty in distress will look elsewhere.

They may well congregate at Frithrie, where Motherwell face Partick Thistle, a side whose form, if fitful, still suggests that they can whip up a rousing contest. Mungo MacLeod, the Partick manager, was wary, though, of the threat posed by the Motherwell strike force. "Owen Coyle has gone to Motherwell and scored three times in three games so he is clearly on form at the moment," he said.

Dundee United's tie away to Stirling Albion also provides interest, but the premier division club have had their best series of results in 13 years, and calamity should not befall them now.

Of the other premier division representatives, Raith Rovers face the greatest handicaps, but they do not play Airdrie, at Broadwood, until Monday. Celtic's match with Clydebank, to be played at Frithrie, goes ahead tomorrow and Dundee City may be fit to add to the obvious difficulties faced by the troubled first division club.

FA CUP STATISTICS

Previous FA Cup meetings

(Home team s L/D round against visitors)

Third round

Birmingham v Stockport

P 1, W 1, D 0, L 0, F 1, A 0

Last meeting: 1-0 (second round, 1924-25)

Cardiff v Sheffield Wed

P 1, W 1, D 0, L 0, F 3, A 0

Last meeting: 3-0 (second round, 1979-80)

Chelsea v Liverpool

P 7, W 4, D 0, L 3, F 14, A 11

Last meeting: 1-2 (fourth round, 1985-86)

Derby v Aston Villa

P 11, W 4, D 1, L 6, F 22, A 32

Last meeting: 3-4 (fourth round, 1991-92)

Everton v Bradford

P 4, W 3, D 0, L 1, F 4, A 3

Last meeting: 1-0 (fourth round, 1986-87)

Heath Town v Middlesbrough

No previous fixtures

Lancaster v Norwich

P 5, W 1, D 3, L 1, F 5, A 5

Last meeting: 2-4 (third round, 1978-79)

Fourth round

Birmingham v Stockport

P 1, W 1, D 0, L 0, F 1, A 0

Last meeting: 1-0 (second round, 1924-25)

Cardiff v Sheffield Wed

P 1, W 1, D 0, L 0, F 3, A 0

Last meeting: 3-0 (second round, 1979-80)

Chelsea v Liverpool

P 7, W 4, D 0, L 3, F 14, A 11

Last meeting: 1-2 (fourth round, 1985-86)

Derby v Aston Villa

P 11, W 4, D 1, L 6, F 22, A 32

Last meeting: 3-4 (fourth round, 1991-92)

Everton v Bradford

P 4, W 3, D 0, L 1, F 4, A 3

Last meeting: 1-0 (fourth round, 1986-87)

Heath Town v Middlesbrough

No previous fixtures

Lancaster v Norwich

P 5, W 1, D 3, L 1, F 5, A 5

Last meeting: 3-4 (third round, 1978-79)

Manchester Utd v Wimbledon

P 1, W 1, D 0, L 0, F 3, A 0

Last meeting: 3-0 (sixth round, 1983-84)

Newcastle v Nottingham Forest

P 14, W 6, D 1, L 7, F 18, A 17

Last meeting: 0-3 (fourth-round replay, 1980-81)

Preston v Reading

P 3, W 1, D 0, L 2, F 2, A 4

Last meeting: 0-1 (second round, 1978-79)

QPR v Barnsley

P 1, W 0, D 0, L 1, F 0, A 1

Last meeting: 0-1 (fourth round, 1989-90)

FA Cup pedigree

(Figure in brackets denotes number of times won)

Annual winners (5): Aston Villa winners (7);

Birmingham winners (1); Blackburn

winners (1); Bolton winners (4); Bradford

winners (1); Brentford winners (1);

Cardiff winners (1); Charlton winners (1);

Chelsea winners (8); Chester City winners

(1); Coventry winners (1); Crystal Palace

winners (1); Derby winners (1); Everton

winners (1); Fulham winners (1); Gillingham

winners (1); Ipswich winners (1); Leicester

City winners (1); Liverpool winners (5);

Luton winners (1); Manchester City winners

(4); Manchester United winners (8);

Middlesbrough winners (1); Newcastle

winners (8); Norwich winners (1);

Nottingham Forest winners (2);

Peterborough winners (1); Portsmouth

winners (1); QPR winners (1); Reading

winners (1); Sheffield Wednesday winners

(1); Stockport winners (1); Watford

winners (2); Wimbledon winners (1);

Woking winners (1); Wrexham winners

(1); Wycombe Wanderers winners (1).

ford sixth round, Cardiff fifth

round, Chelsea winners (1); Chester City

winners (1); Coventry winners (1); Crystal

Palace first round, Derby winners (1);

Everton winners (1); Fulham winners (1);

Gillingham winners (1); Gillingham winners

(1); Ipswich winners (1); Leicester City

winners (1); Leicester City first round

round, Liverpool winners (5); Luton first

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JULIAN DESBOROUGH

FOOTBALL

Receivers in race to rescue crisis club

By Jason Nisse and Russell Kempson

RECEIVERS appointed to AFC Bournemouth, the struggling Nationwide League second division club, have 14 days to find a rescue plan or many of the team's players could leave.

Lloyds Bank brought in the accountants, Arthur Andersen, yesterday after rejecting a deal to restructure the club's £4.5 million of debts. Bournemouth, sixteenth in the second division, is losing £60,000 a month, before interest.

The Football League is allowing the team to play to its full capacity against Bristol City and may be prepared to allow Bournemouth to carry on for the rest of the season. "We want to retain League football in Dorset," a spokesman said.

The League said it wanted assurances from Arthur Andersen that it could meet its financial commitments. The accountants believe the club's ground at Dean Court can be sold to developers for £2 million. They have been approached by a number of white knight rescuers and are considering offers.

However, legal experts pointed out that Arthur Andersen is unlikely to keep the club running beyond 14 days. If receivers dismiss players after the two-week deadline, the accountants are liable to make redundancy payments, so it is expected that if the club continues beyond two weeks, it will be with the players as free agents employed on a match-by-match basis. At that point, any of Bournemouth's players can leave for free. The

League may ask for a transfer fee, but under law, none would be payable.

Arthur Andersen moved in after the directors of the club had lost a bid for a court injunction preventing Lloyds, which is owed £2.3 million, from calling in the receivers.

Roy Pack, a Bournemouth director, was critical of Lloyds for turning down the proposed refinancing plan. "This is an absolute disaster for the club and its creditors, who now won't get paid," Pack said.

Bournemouth will not be the first club to play while in receivership — most recently, Gillingham laboured under £1 million of debts before being rescued in July 1995. Middlesbrough collapsed in 1986, to be rescued by a consortium led by Steve Gibson, the present chairman, and Wolverhampton Wanderers has been in receivership twice.

Millwall went into administration earlier this week with debts of £10 million and losses of £250,000 a month. It is expected to be rescued in a deal involving a £6 million share issue in the next six weeks.

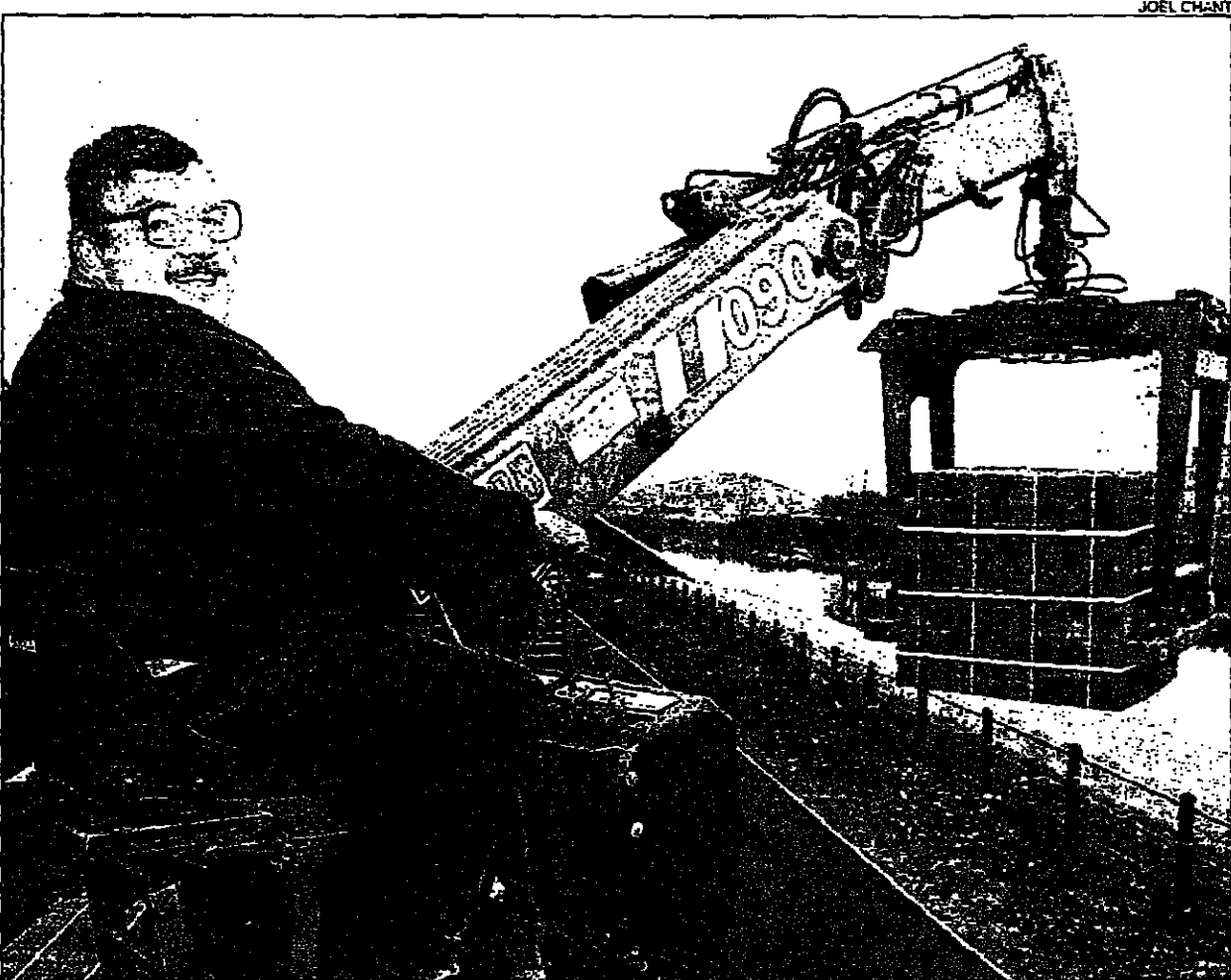
Alan Buckley, the former West Bromwich Albion manager, who was dismissed on Wednesday, is considering taking legal action against the Nationwide League first division club. Buckley had 2½ years left on his contract, worth around £250,000, but is understood to have been offered only £70,000.

Tranmere Rovers have reported a record loss of nearly £2 million. A fall in gate receipts and a lack of profit on transfers meant the club made a loss of £1,956,111 for the last financial year. It compares with a profit of £92,799 in the previous 12 months.

The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) has ordered a feasibility study into building the Republic's own national football stadium for the millennium. At present, the FAI rents the Irish Rugby Union's stadium at Lansdowne Road, Dublin, for international games and is contracted to remain there until 2000.

Buckley dispute

Hodgson's choice, Magazine



Smith takes a break from being a football chairman and sets to work loading more bricks for his delivery round

Hednesford cross cultural divide

Nowhere, not even on the pitch, will the contrast be greater than in the directors' seating. Imagine the conversation before the FA Cup fourth-round tie at the Riverside Stadium today. Mike Smith, chairman of Hednesford Town, to Steve Gibson, the Middlesbrough manager, who is now a pundit on the radio. "How's your multi-million pound international haulage business doing, Steve?" Gibson: "Fine, thanks. Where did your brick round take you this week, Mike?"

If there is a world of a difference between the globe-trotting football magnates such as Fabrizio Ravanelli and Hednesford's main man, the long-serving Joe O'Connor, it is no different at chairman level. Gibson, is one of the North East's most successful businessmen, whose money has transformed Middlesbrough. Smith had a haulage business, too, but it failed. Now he drives a lorry, delivering bricks around the country.

"The business was not doing well," Smith said. "I just came in one night and said: 'I have had enough.' From employer, he joined the employed and each morning this week he has loaded up his lorry with bricks. His workmates have taken 50 tickets for tomorrow. 'My boss is going to be in the crowd and I am going to be sitting in the directors' box,' Smith said, laughing it up.

David Powell finds underdogs reeling in their moment in football's spotlight

Without a brick wall in the Hednesford goalmouth, the Vauxhall Conference club may be heading for a thrashing on the ground of FA Cup Premier League opponents. "I think we have gone about as far as we can go," John Baldwin, the Hednesford manager, said on the night of the third-round defeat of York City. "We will take the planks up on the Friday night, with hammers and nails."

If bricks, planks and nails are forbidden, at least Baldwin has his lucky Bugs Bunny tie to go with his chipmunk laugh. He cut a cartoon figure himself after the York game — a tubby, bespectacled man, with Bugs Bunny tie, sitting atop the club washing machine, giggling and repeating: "Brilliant, brilliant. It is less games for us now to the FA Cup Final than to the Trophy final."

Bugs may need substituting because, five days later, Hednesford went out of the FA Umbro Trophy, 3-1 at Northwich Victoria. Lee Steele and Paul Tait, skilful though they looked, are hardly Ravanelli and Juninho, but

FA CUP

they gave the Hednesford defence the runaround. One could see Middlesbrough converting sloppiness like this into double figures.

The outcome was just as Baldwin had feared and not one of his players dared look him in the eye as they walked off the pitch. Standing on the terraces an hour before kick-off, he admitted: "It is unrealistic to expect them not to be thinking about next week. Yet this is probably more important to us than next Saturday because this is our chance to get to Wembley. So Wembley must wait for another year, unless..."

Baldwin's tune had changed. "If we get beaten, I shall be very disappointed," he said. "I do not like losing, whether it is Middlesbrough, Northwich or tiddlywinks at home."

The Hednesford travel club took one coach to Northwich: 38 are booked for tomorrow and support will exceed 5,000, four times their average home game. "Pressure! This is not pressure!" Baldwin said. "Pressure is when you have

SNOOKER

Frustrated Davis lets silence do his talking

By Phil Yates

STEVE DAVIS, for so long the most quotable player in the game, gave monosyllabic responses to media questions after being beaten 5-4 by Mark King in the first round of the Regal Welsh Open at Newport yesterday.

Defeat in itself has never prevented Davis from being anything other than co-operative. One can only assume his series of "Yes" or "No" answers stemmed from a deep-seated frustration at the manner in which he was eliminated from the first ranking tournament of the year.

Davis, six times the world champion yet without a title since his success in this tournament in 1993 and down to No 10 in the world rankings, was 5-1 ahead then 4-3 down. He had levelled at 4-4 and led 5-3 in the deciding frame when he missed an elementary black off his spot with the winning shot looming.

King, the world No 39, edged back into the reckoning before he slammed in a difficult brown from distance to initiate the clearance to black that secured a meeting with Andy Hicks or Michael Judge in the second round.

"I've practised with Steve a lot and he has given me some right good hidings," King, who, like Davis, hails from Romford, said. "Maybe that's why my beating him has hurt a bit. It is probably my best ever win because it is still quite a feat to get the better of Steve."

In an equally tense finish, Fergal O'Brien, of Dublin, not the most fluent player on the circuit, abandoned the ultra-methodical approach for which he is renowned to win a 5-4 victory over Martin Clark. O'Brien accumulated only 40 points in the first four frames but, having arrived at the inescapable conclusion that he had nothing to lose, constructed his recovery around breaks of 84, 57, 62, 95 and 55.

Even so, O'Brien's rearguard action was almost rendered academic. Clark, handicapped by neck pains, caused by vertebrae friction, hauled his way back into the deciding frame only to leave a straightforward pink in the jaws of a pocket with the black ideally situated.

RESULTS: First round, F O'Brien 6-5 M Clark (57-64, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71); M King 5-4 S Davis (57-64, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71); M Judge 5-4 A Hicks (57-64, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71); M Clark 5-4 M Martin (57-64, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71); F O'Brien 5-4 M Clark (57-64, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71); M King 5-4 S Davis (57-64, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71); M Judge 5-4 A Hicks (57-64, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71); M Clark 5-4 M Martin (57-64, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71); F O'Brien 5-4 M Clark (57-64, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71); M King 5-4 S Davis (57-64, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71); M Judge 5-4 A Hicks (57-64, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71); M Clark 5-4 M Martin (57-64, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71); F O'Brien 5-4 M Clark (57-64, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71, 50-71); 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weekend

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SATURDAY JANUARY 25 1997



My generation, for America, was born in 1939 and from the start America was Dreamland. The town in which I grew up in the 1940s — Wigton, in Cumberland (pop. 5,000) — was enclosed, church-bidden, ration-booked, all but car-less, a cat's cradle of families and alley ways, still in a hangover of 1920s depression and stuffed with Victorian values. Whatever its own, true, deep dreams, which may in the end be stronger than those of Hollywood, it was a planet away from the new worlds flickering twice nightly at the Palace Cinema in Meeting House Lane.

America has been Europe's Promised Land, and its escape route for centuries. About 200 years ago, a few miles from Wigton, in Grasmere, Wordsworth and Coleridge would discuss the virgin possibilities of America, in which Coleridge had once planned to settle an ideal commune. From the bitter agricultural areas of Cumbria and the mines off its west coast, working people and their families, including members of my own, had taken up all they had

and plunged across the 3,000 miles of ocean in search of a life less oppressive, freer, richer. In the case of my generation, however, America seemed to be invading us. Their arrival as saviours and as the new Imperialists in the First World War had given an intimation of it. But it was Charlie Chaplin and America's determined and brilliant trade policy of using the movies to sell the States which really did the business.

What I experienced as a boy in Wigton was our former colony making a counter strike for the most powerful colony of all: the imagination.

It began for young males with the cowboy films. The heroes were ordinary people, and all they needed was a horse, a gun and a just cause. The cowboy identification was helped in Wigton by the ancient presence of horses which far outnumbered cars. But it was the free simplicity of the men

which sent us all galloping down the streets with a hitch-kick, slapping our rumps to urge on the steed while nimbly holding the reins in the left hand, clicking tongue against palate to imitate the clapping of the hooves. The primary message of America was etched early and etched deep — one free (American) man of righteousness, alone against a world or a wilderness, would and did overcome.

A little later for me came the musicals. In Wigton at that time many of us whistled tunes as we went up and down the streets, and there was singing in the pubs and in the streets again when the girls linked arms and walked up from the

clothing factory. But the musicals metamorphosed our country efforts into available fantasy, opera for the people, street glamour.

And the seduction through the movies continued, even with the gangster films — the nearest we got to American realism, although we did not realise that at the time. We imitated the accent, we chewed the gum, we smoked like They smoked. The American invasion was under way.

Our next stage, adolescence, was lit up by rock 'n' roll, and the invention of the teenager. American popular music had been lapped up by the British

for decades. Minority tastes had found fierce followings; the blues in my case. But Elvis Presley was the great detonator, the white boy with the voice of the sorcerer who brought black music and movement and sex to the millions of young people who longed to be part of that sound and its sensuality.

Music pierces defences unlike any other art, it is like passion itself, and the longing to hear the rock 'n' roll anthems became a fever.

There is a café still in Wigton, The Spotted Cow, run then by my best friend's father, and one day a juke box arrived. It was as if a space ship had landed up the Amazon. If you went in after hours and used tokens (as

we did on the very first night) you could play Elvis Presley again and again and again at full blast until it hit the nerve centre like a fix. Wigton's first rock band was formed — the Memphis Five. And my hair was trained and greased into the full Elvis Hokusai full-frontal wave.

So the teenager arrived in Cumberland with the new hairstyles and the jeans and the claims to belong to a class of its own outside our closed class system. James Dean stamped that home on the screen in *Rebel Without a Cause* — the epitaph of that time.

Dean came out of Holden Caulfield, and Huck Finn in a progression which marked another strand in the American takeover of the 1940s and 1950s. My generation found their own lives often more accurately mirrored in American fiction than in British fiction.

Of course, there was

D.H. Lawrence behind us, and Kingsley Amis and the others to come, but for a time John Steinbeck and *Cannery Row* with its skiving, drinking, philosophical "boys" seemed much more relevant to the more entertaining human stories lived out in Wigton than anything being written over here. And Steinbeck led to a craze for American writers through Hemingway to Mailer and Bellow. It was they, I thought, who were drawing the master maps of our new-found traumatic 20th century.

All this was in place in the 1960s when I went to New York for the first time. The takeover, so well laid by Hollywood, the music business and the fictions of those postwar years, simply took off.

The great statue was not to a monarch but to an ideal — Liberty. They did indeed seem to dance in the streets — and there was such scandalous abundance in everything. The first meal I attempted was a sandwich in a delicatessen on Broadway. It was so big that only Desperate Dan could have

Continued on page 2

The dream that died

Since boyhood Melvyn Bragg has been in love with America, but today he finds its culture infantile and violent. Here he describes the end of the affair

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AIR NEW ZEALAND

When George Bush became President of the United States he told the world that now he was the most powerful man in the world, no one could make him eat broccoli any more. His remarks opened up that dark heart of every politician who is driven to power by some terrible childhood loathing. Was John Major so scarred by his postwar experience of brawn that he had to climb all the way to No 10 to get away from it? Perhaps President Clinton could have lived up to his tedious inaugural address with the thought, "My fellow Americans, let us build a bridge so that we can go half way and drop pop tarts from it."

For me, true power would mean the option never to have to eat imported tropical fruits. Pawpaws and plantains litter supermarket fruit stalls and restaurant puddings

lists, along with passion fruits and pomegranates. Yet buy one and, without fail, it will be either overripe or hard as a rhino's corn. If a shop sold a tin of mouldy cornflakes, recompense would be swift and complete. Sell a sour tangerine or a rosey, supposedly honeydew melon and it's caveat emptor.

Supermarket fruit stalls are like those craft shops which sell tatty Indian artefacts for £100 that go for 10p on the streets of Delhi. So thrilled are we meant to be at the exotic range on offer that the quality becomes immaterial.

Take the avocado pear. A soft West Indian fruit in origin, it was meant to be knocked lazily off its tree and chewed out of its skin. The stone could then be kicked insouciantly down the street. Since it found its way on to salad plates, under cover of dressings and

mayonnaise, however, it has become as leathery as the faces of the health nuts who obsess about it. Go to the avocado section at a fruit stall and you find people squeezing the pears as a sinister plastic surgeon might handle a silicon breast.

The mango, a fleshy, juicy, delicious fruit from the East Indies, like all fruits, has its season. Not that this seems to bother the restaurants which offer it in stringy, odourless chunks cut on the skin that have to be tugged off with an aggressive elbow action. When all those poets wrote about fruit, equating it with love, fertility and downright sex, the tough, green imported mango was not what they had in mind.

SERIOUS SHOPPING TROPICAL FRUIT



BY PHILIP DELVES BROUGHTON

Peaches, apples, melons, bananas, even plums and the odd coconut are all rich in sexual innuendo. Had you taken the author of the *Song of Solomon* to

the average British supermarket fruit stall before he settled down with his sherbert and scribe, however, he would have to have done some serious reworking on his imagery.

It is still possible to find a decent apple when required, thanks to the miracles of crop-spraying. Anyone who disagrees with modern intensive fruit-farming methods should try an organic apple. Not one fallen from Granny's apple tree full of the taste of childhood, innocent and first kisses, rather the sort sold in organic food shops, dark, muddy and tasting like foot fungus. Laughably expensive, too. But then, there is a justice in the fact that that pinched, agitated look, reserved for organic foodies

should come at such a steep price. Much underestimated in the hurricane of tough new fruits is the art of tinning. As puddings go, even the most extravagant fruit salad would be pushed to rival the tinned peach, adorned with a cowlick of cream. Tinned lychees are a good example of what can usefully be done with a more tropical fruit.

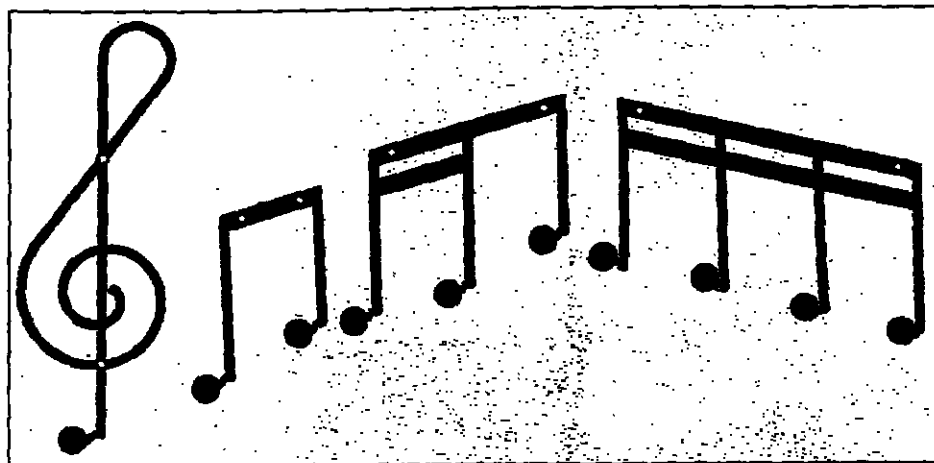
A lychee, bought in its lizardish skin then gnawed out from round its stone, is a bitter-sweet experience. Stone it, skin it and tin it in its own juice, serve it up with vanilla ice-cream even, and you have something fit for the gods.

For the most part, however, shops continue to bombard us with their poor, expensive versions of the real thing. The more exotic the fruit, the healthier one is led to imagine it must be. The more one is supposed to pay for it. Yet the star

fruit was meant to be eaten *in situ* in South-East Asia, not imported and sliced on to octagonal black plates in over-ambitious English restaurants. Guava, kiwi and sharon fruits are a menace, winking from their shelves with the promise of sweet pleasures and tropical musk, when all they do is fleece their buyers before revealing tired old flesh beneath their exotic wrappings.

For those fruit fascists who insist that grisly plantain or rubbery pawpaw are the only guarantees of a permanent state of hydro-colonic bliss, there are some very reasonable package trips to the Caribbean and Far East. They cost no more than a few trips to the organic food shop, the fruit might be ripe, and the rest of us can get stuck into a custard-smothered rhubarb crumble.

• Giles Coren is away.



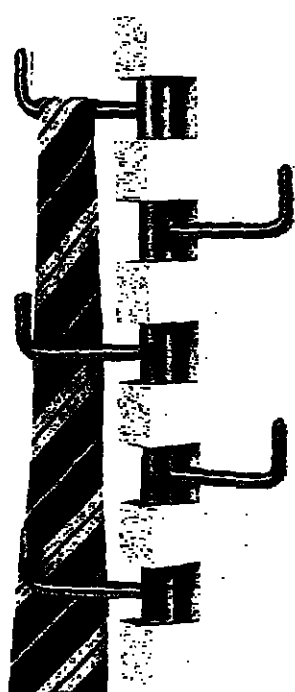
ABOVE: Ten sturdy plastic hooks in four separate musical pieces, £14.95 (including p&p) in black or multicoloured. Also in hand-forged iron and steel, £65, from Instrumental Furniture (0171-328 0058)

Hang it, try the new hook look

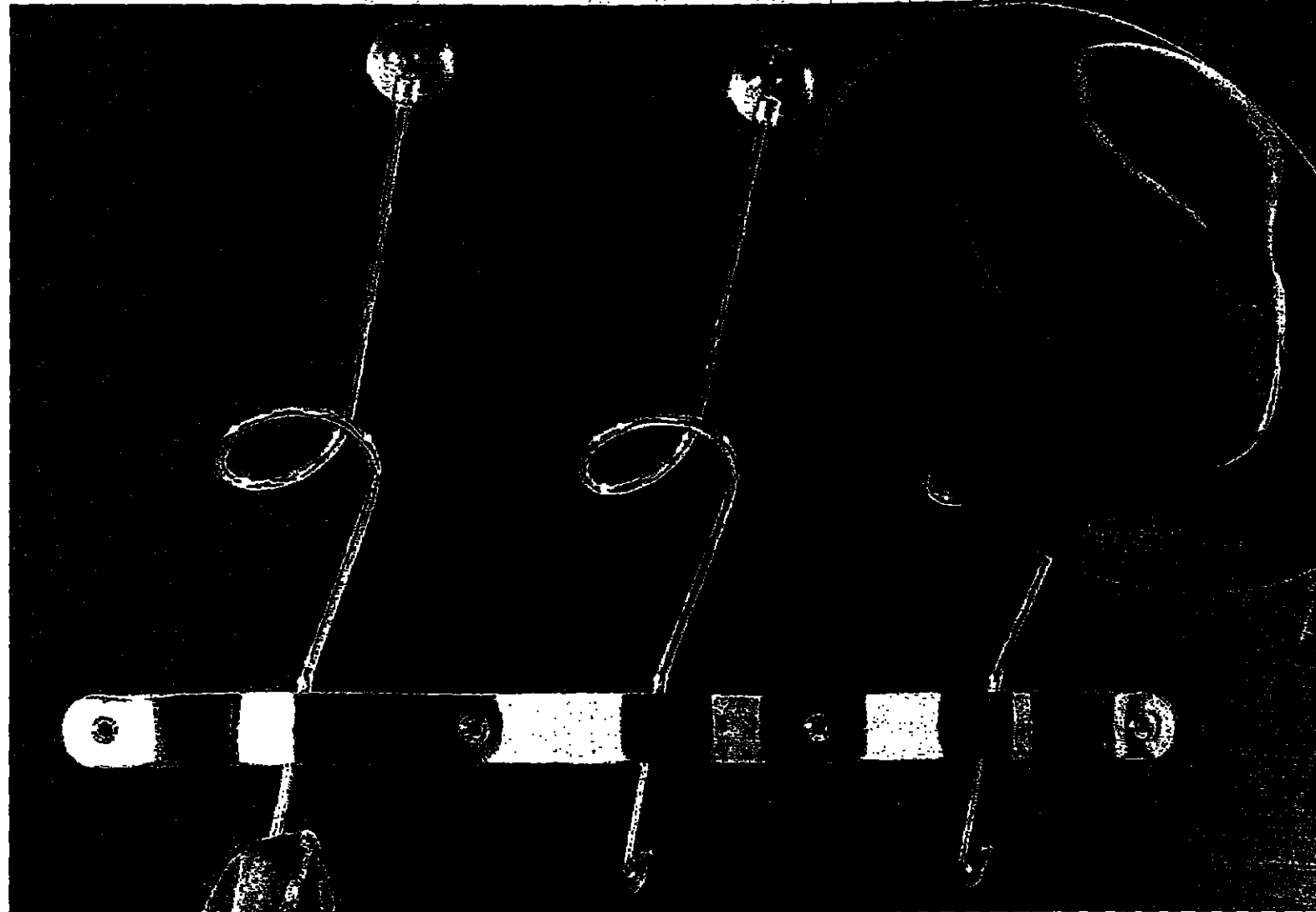


HOUSES have a habit of shrinking once all your clutter has moved in, too. So to get maximum usage from minimum square footage has become an industry in itself. Shops such as the Holding Company in London specialise in storage, as do several mail-order catalogues brimming with ingenious new systems for a compact, tidy lifestyle. But few things can beat the good old-fashioned hook: a practical addition to any kitchen, bathroom, bedroom or hallway. And, in the house-proud 1990s, they have taken on a whole new decorative lease of life.

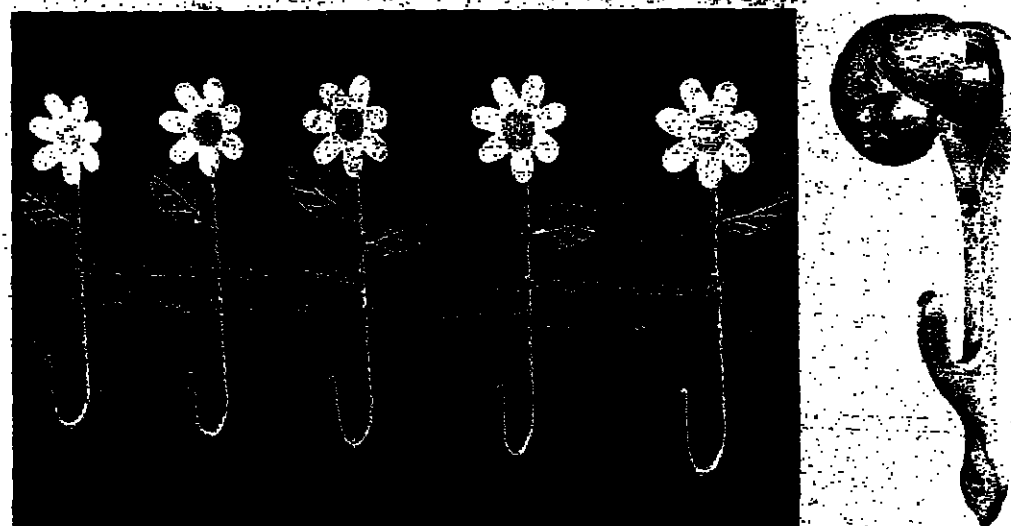
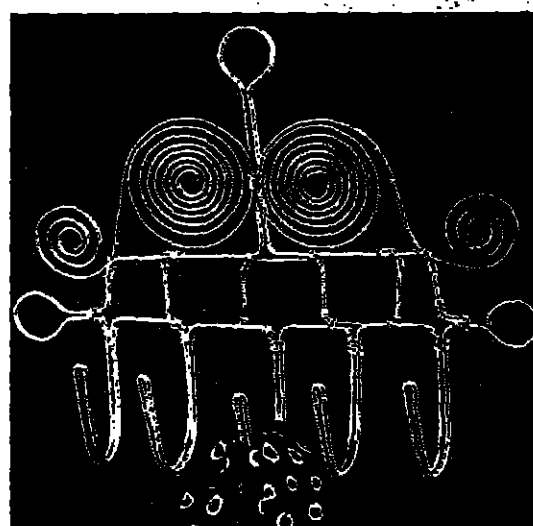
SOPHIE CHAMIER



LEFT: Viper iron-crafted coat hook by Maurice Long, £29.95, from Heals, 196 Tottenham Court Road, W1 (0171-636 1666) and branches
ABOVE: Quasimodo coat hooks in solid beech with clear-lacquered steel hooks, £69 for set of five (or three hooks, £55), from Aero, 96 Westbourne Road, W2 (0171-221 1940)
RIGHT: Handmade in South Africa, a five-hook wire rack (22cm x 18cm), £8.95 (p&p £1) from Ukwenzu at Idonia van der Bij, 25a Museum Street, WC1 (0171-636 4650)



ABOVE: Chrome with resin tips, the Why Not coat-hook set by Italian designers Zorodiegno, £75, from Furness & Furness, 83 Tottenham Court Road, W1 (0171-580 8223)
BELOW MIDDLE: Made in the Philippines, the five-hook daisy rack in painted metal, £14.95, from Play and branches nationwide (0121-351 7100)
BELOW RIGHT: The Arrow hook in lead-free pewter with shell, £29.95, from Knobs & Knockers, 561 Kings Road, SW6 (0171-384 2884; for a brochure, call 01256 773012)



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'Britain is the truer melting pot now'

Continued from page 1

I tackled it. I found the perfect blues club in the Village — all black, no sweat it seemed — no problem. I helicoptered between the skyscrapers feeling like Dan Dare — part of the future. I went to Bloomingdale's with a wad and nearly sickened myself trying to spend it all on presents to be shipped back home as if I had become part of Marshall Aid. Bookshops were open up to midnight and, after that, you could go to a bar and get a beer. Closing time in England then — 10pm. This was indeed the Promised Land.

Of course, I was in a very privileged position. Harry Saltzman had liked the Debussy television script I had done for Ken Russell and took me on to write screenplays. I saw none of the destination. I did not go to the South. My trip took me nowhere near the grind of the industrial north and yet I would contend that my first experience was not unlike others of my generation and their first trip to the land which had so successfully pitched for their young imaginations.

What legitimises my euphoria in retrospect is that America was then the place where so many liberating ideas and liberating movements were taking off — in race with Martin Luther King, in young politics it seemed with JFK. Scholars, scientists, artists of all kinds were pulled across the Atlantic by the centrifugal force of the new order, new world. I sang the Freedom song and the times were a-changing.

But when finally I got to Hollywood, 7,000 miles from Joe's picture house in Wigan, I lasted only a few weeks. The offer of a scriptwriting contract did not appeal. Perhaps I was homesick, perhaps I was daunted by it all. My more heroic explanation to myself was that I hated the authoritarian set up. The screenplay was first stop in the movie business, but the writer paid for this pole position by being trampled on by everyone at all times.

Bumbar was my fault, I thought, not the fault of America, which fulfilled all its childhood promises until it hit the buffers in Vietnam in that same decade. Another America, an uplier, more destructive America emerged. It had been there all the time. I am sure, but well overlaid by America's world view of itself promoted through the cinema. And, although it was a tribute to America that the students and

the intellectuals led the movement which helped stop the war, nevertheless the war itself unleashed the dark side of the dream. *Paradise Lost*, said Robert Lowell, was the first American poem.

Yet throughout the 1970s, as Britain reeled from loss of Empire, loss of direction, loss of control in so many areas of life, the lure of the dollar and the land of opportunities still drew us. And there was a sense in which my generation could not yet really blame America — however much we railed against Cambodia, napalm, South American dictatorships and marched on Grosvenor Square: we had



Cowboy heroes inspired the young

taken on America's wounds as tenderly as its aspirations. But when in the 1980s we were lectured through the movies and through the new triumphalist commentators that "greed was good" and "greed is everything", it was time to say "that's not us". Greed replaced public service as the ethos. The very words "public service" became a despised aside.

It was in that time that the traditions and virtues of Britain, coming out of its dark, post-imperial night of the soul, reasserted themselves.

There is still great decency here and a tolerance above that of America. I think, and of most other countries. The racial divisions in Britain, for instance, are nasty ruptures: in America they are

chasmic and perilous. Those who know both countries say that we are the truer melting pot now. Continues, although parodied by the smear of "theme park", matter to enough British people to stabilise society and reach back into what so many have struggled for.

America injected us with the urgency of the present. But now in New York there is not the layered and rather subversive feeling of richness I feel in London, a feeling with which I am so familiar that it ought to have dulled. It has not. New York has.

The same tired, monstrous sandwiches are served in the same delicatessen in the same abrasive manner, but the zip has gone. Our own energies — confused, crushed and chastened over the last half century — are reasserting themselves, and the force is here.

I think this country is remarkable in having survived this century in such good shape. After two murderous world wars, a massive loss of wealth and life, the end of Empire, a haemorrhaging of talent, a near implosion of industry, Britain ought, were it a human being, to be in intensive care. Instead, we are stronger than ever in many ways and the strengths come from our traditions. Our best future is not in following America's present but building on the best of our past.

I suspect that my experience of America is very like that of many of my generation — and held by those in power today. Instead of the American metropolitan dream, we have been saddled with the suspect American corporate ethic.

Let me end where I began: with the movies. World make-market movies are all American, partly because American trade agreements insist on favourable deals, country by country. In recent years — brilliant and thrilling though some of them are — they have shown a society whose values are violent, infantile and nihilistic. There is nothing there to nourish the dreams of a Coleridge looking for a paradise on earth or a working man in Wigan looking for a new better beginning. It seems increasingly a foreign place well worth knowing and trading with and enjoying, but no longer either the dream that draws us there or the spell that comes back to bind us. Perhaps in a quiet way, it is time for us to make our own Declaration of Independence.

• Bragg on America is on ITV tomorrow and next Sunday at 10.45pm.

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Check your wardrobe



ABOVE: Dark blue stretch shirt, £26.99 from Jeffrey Rogers, branches nationwide (0171-208 4300). Beige check trousers, £95, Burberrys, 18-22 The Haymarket, SW1 (0171-930 3343)



ABOVE: Tartan stretch dress, £275. Plein Sud, from Whistles, 12 St Christopher's Place, London W1 (0171-487 4484). Pale blue cardigan with cream fake-fur collar, £59, Kookai, 123 Kensington High Street, W8 (0171-937 4411). Pale blue tights, £5.99, Jonathon Aston and leading department stores nationwide (call 0116-286 2388 for stockists). Tan leather open-toe sandals, £125, from Russell & Bromley, branches nationwide (call 0171-629 6903 for stockists)

Scottish fashion has never looked so appealing. Heath Brown gets smart for Burns Night

Burns Night gives me the perfect excuse to laud the heritage of Scottish fashion with its wealth of luxurious fabrics and designs. Perennial highland favourites such as plush cashmeres, colourful Argyle patterns, Shetland knitwear, tartans and tweeds are the ideal investment buys that are hard to date. Combine them with modern textures, fabrics and styles for a sleek feminine look. Knee-high Argyle socks can be worn with a cheeky kick pleat skirt and finished off with a seriously high pair of heels or a two-tone, slim, tailored trouser suit can be teamed with a check light cotton shirt.

Argyle, originally taken from the Argyle clan tartan, with its multi-coloured diamond pattern, is widely seen on mass-produced socks, scarves and sweaters. It has been stylised with different colourways over the years to become one of the most familiar and best used basic designs. From Vivienne Westwood to Pringle, its appeal can reach the stylish middle-aged golfer and the fashion victim alike.

Tartans and plaids are always popular but tend to date a little easier. Versions of Black Watch and Stewart tartans were very 1980s while updated pastel variants can look cheap once out of vogue. The best are the signature checks based on plaid by traditional British fashion labels such as Burberrys (left), Mulberry (top right) and Aquascutum. These are dependable classics that can be worn for years.

The greatest of Scottish fabrics is tweed. Not, as sometimes thought, named after its association with the River Tweed (on whose banks it was indeed made) but from the



ABOVE: Dark green jacket, £265, matching trousers £140, Paul Smith, 40 Floral Street, WC2 (0171-379 7133). Salted, W1 Tartan check shirt, £75; leather bag, £165, Mulberry, 41 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 3900)

LEFT: Beige and cream Argyle wool sweater, £85, Pringle, branches nationwide (01450 360259). Beige kick pleat skirt, £54, Jigsaw, 126-127 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 4484)

Photographs by Richard Burns
Hair and make-up by Sally Kvalheim
Styling by Amanda Uppal
Dumny by Stockman London
9 Dallington Street, EC1 (0171-251 6943)

Scottish pronunciation of twill — "tweel" — tweed. Slightly rough in texture, this closely woven textile is hardwearing and smart. Designers worldwide are constantly scouring the weaving sheds of the Hebrides for new designs and unusual combinations. Christian Lacroix and Vivienne Westwood never produce a show without wonderfully extravagant tweeds.

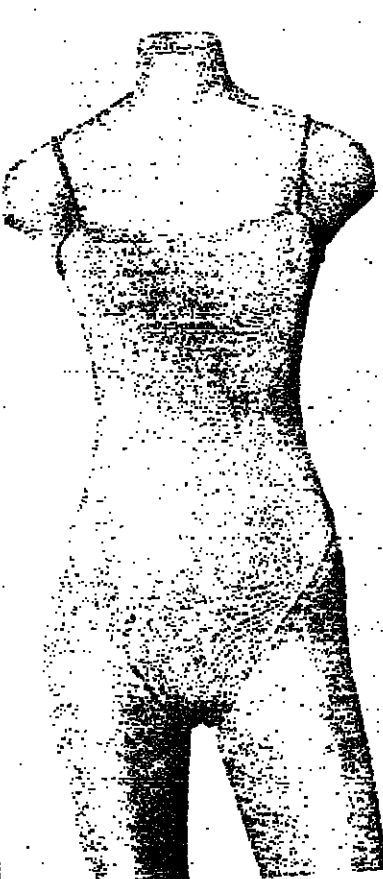
But beware of imitations. It is ironic that many "Scottish" designs

seen in our shops are about as Scots in origin as a cappuccino. The influence on international clothes labels from Scotland is surprisingly strong. But the real McCoy from its homeland cannot be beaten. No one can reproduce better tweeds or more luxurious Argyle knits than the Scots.

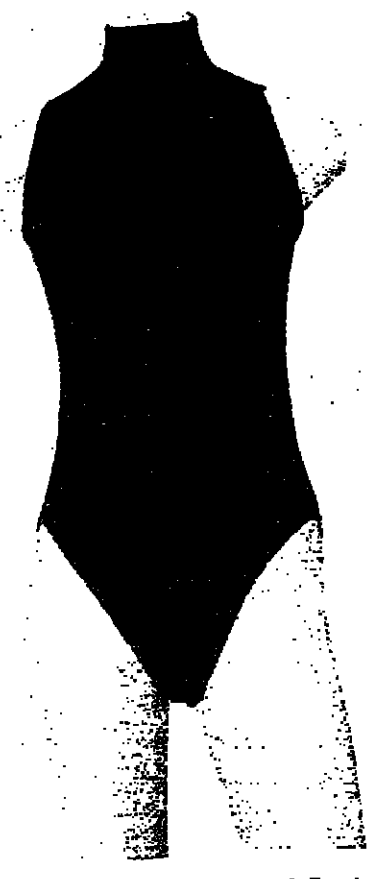
So celebrate the authentic textiles of Scotland by investing in one of the timeless classics. It will be money well spent.

THREE OF A KIND

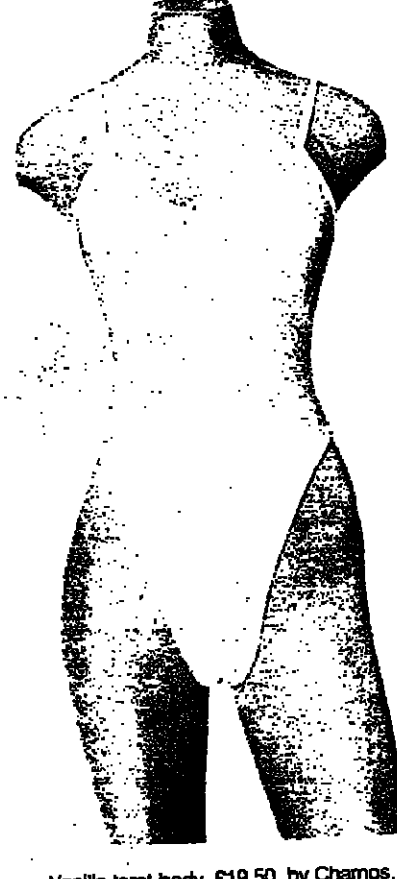
How did women get by before the all-in-one body? It has quickly become an essential for every modern woman. The selection is vast with styles that are both underwear and outerwear. Here are my favourites H.B.



Lime green jersey body with spaghetti straps, £375, from Giorgio Armani, 37 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 6232)



Chocolate fine-ribbed body, £99, Fogal, 3a Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-493 0900); Harrods, Knightsbridge, SW1



Vanilla tarot body, £19.50, by Chamos, at major department stores nationwide (0115 9322191 for stockists)

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Featured here are some of the many items contained in our Women's Classics catalogue. The traditional "golfer" cardigan made from the finest two-ply Scottish Cashmere

is absolutely not to be missed. Shown with a stunning wrap skirt in Liberty pure wool challis, it is one of the many co-ordinated outfits on offer to you.

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The newly restored Italian garden at Heligan in Cornwall

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OPEN THIS WEEKEND

■ Wimpole Hall, Arrington, near Royston, Hertfordshire (01223 207257).

Ten miles southwest of Cambridge on the A603, eight miles north of Royston on the A14. Open Wed, Sat, Sun 10am-4pm. £2, children free. The park and woodland are open daily at no charge.

Wimpole is a repository of gardening history, dating from the 17th century when the great house was built for Sir Thomas Chicheley, before being enlarged and embellished for successive owners by leading architects including Gibbs, Flitcroft and Soane.

The sense of expansive landscape at this time of year can be overwhelming, and it was this enormous scale which inspired some of Wimpole's most impres-

sive garden and landscape features, such as the magnificent two-and-a-quarter mile south avenue, originally planted with elms by Charles Bridgeman. These were replaced with limes (grown from grafts of trees planted in the park by Bridgeman) by the National Trust in the 1980s after Dutch elm disease had killed the originals.

Bridgeman's north avenue was naturalised into clumps by Capability Brown, whose alterations included building the sham castle folly, originally designed by Sanderson Miller.

Visitors are advised to allow themselves a couple of hours — and to wear comfortable walking boots — to explore the entrancing series of walks through park and woodland and to appreciate the work by the NT to preserve and restore this outstanding landscape.

■ Brobury House Gardens, Brobury, Herefordshire (01981 500229).

About 11 miles west of Hereford, off the A438 at Bredwardine Bridge. Open all year Mon-Sat, 9am-4pm (winter). £2, children £1.

Overlooking the Wye valley, Brobury enjoys a superb setting and looks across the river to the vicarage of Bredwardine, occupied for some years by the diarist Francis Kilvert. Much of the garden dates from the Victorian period, when the house was built, and there are fine trees, such as the trio of cedars that dominate the lawn to one side.

As well as formal terraces and pools, including a canal with a statue of Neptune at one end, there are interesting younger trees,

planted by the present owners, among which white-barked birches are particularly striking at this time of year. Most interesting among the trees, however, is a venerable oak that pre-dates the house by centuries, just one of the many discoveries here.

■ Heligan, Pentewan, St Austell, Cornwall (01726 844157).

Take the B3273 to Mewagissey from St Austell. Open daily all year, 10am-4.30pm (last tickets in winter 3.30pm). £3.40, children £2, concessions £2.90.

Heligan has acquired such a reputation since its restoration was begun in 1991 that a visit during winter can be particularly rewarding for the relative peace compared to a busy summer day. Also at this

time of year, the scale of the garden — which extends to nearly 60 acres and was decaying quietly for a century until the restoration began — can be best appreciated. The restored Georgian walled gardens and fascinating range of buildings, such as the banana and peach houses and melon pit, are shown off without the summer decoration of plants and, similarly, the selection of magnificent rare conifers are presented in the most striking fashion when the surrounding trees are without leaf.

For many visitors it is the energy of the restoration work, combining with the individual features of this garden of historic importance and the exciting atmosphere of nature contained but not controlled, that leaves the most lasting impression.

GEORGE PLUMPTRE



The expansive landscape is the essence of the garden at Wimpole Hall in Hertfordshire, as evidenced by this view looking across the park towards the distant castle folly



As well as formal terraces, Brobury House has its own canal

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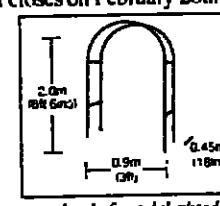
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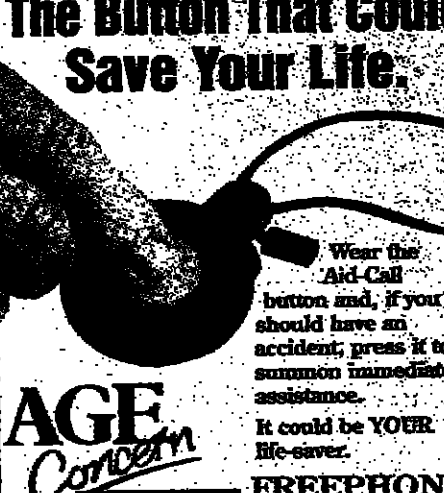
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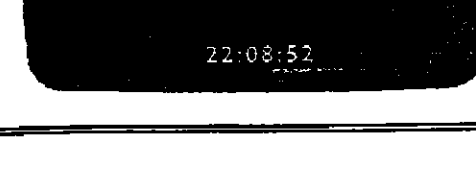
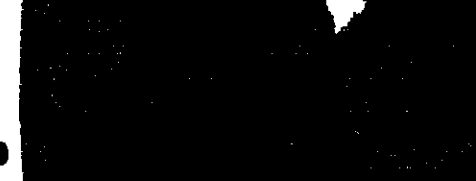
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Natural route to more privacy

One of the most attractive ways to screen a garden is to train an espaliered tree or pleached hedge, says Stephen Anderton

When you plant if you want a light summer screen, across the garden, something to close a garden, hide passing cars and not so much at ground level as at eye level. The answer can come in the form of an espaliered tree or a pleached hedge, a hedge on stilts.

It is easy to think of hedges as great for things whose tops get so wide you can hardly reach across to clip them. It need not be so. You can make a hedge that is not like with careful pruning, particularly in its formative years.

Suppose you have a garden wall 4ft high and want another 4ft of screening above it. If the foundations were strong enough you could, at great cost, add on another 4ft of wall. Or you could plant a hedge beside it, trained to have clean trunks for the lower 4ft and the hedge proper above. Hornbeam and beech make perfect subjects for this, because they have clean grey trunks which do not produce suckers, and they hold their brown leaves all winter, except for beech, mid-brown for hornbeam.

The trees should be planted 12in from the wall, because over the years the trunks will develop a considerable girth. There must be room for these to develop attractively. If the trunks are clean and straight, they make a stylish, formal feature marching along the wall, but if they are squeezed against the wall they look uncomfortable. As it is from the wall the tendencies of the trunks to be drawn away, to the light and buffeted forward by wind are also more easily avoided.

How wide apart you set them is a matter of choice. About 18in-24in is normal for a beech hedge, but bare trunks at this proximity look rather manic. About 3ft-6ft is suitable for a stilted hedge, although it will take a couple of years, longer to knit together to form a screen at the top. If you like the idea of fat trunks,



A formal, low, pleached lime hedge, showing the cut-off tops

then the wider the spacing the better. In hedges, the closer the trunks are set, the greater is the competition for food and moisture, and the trunks remain thinner — except in the end trees, which have competition on one side only.

In a ground-level hedge, it is vital to get the foliage and twig structure dense at ground level before it is allowed to make height. When planting young beech and hornbeam, cut the young plants off at 9in high, while still at pencil thickness, to encourage bushiness low down.

In a stilted hedge things are different. Only a clean, straight trunk is needed at low level, and the urgency is to get the plants up to the foliage level so that they can start to do their job of making a screen. It is, therefore, worth buying taller plants. A 6ft-7ft feathered tree — one with a central leader and short side branches all the way up its stem — has had low foliage in the nursery and made the energy to put on height there. Give it perhaps a year to settle in unpruned, before cleaning off the small lower branches to your desired trunk

height. Its energies will now be concentrated on making growth where you need it, at the top.

How you train the branches at the top is a matter of choice. But for speed of cover it is worth training the side branches down to the horizontal — "pleaching" them, as it is called. Strong side branches always try to grow upwards to the light, but if they are trained horizontally a dense low covering of twigs is ensured.

To train the branches, set up stout posts at either end of the hedge of, say 4in by 4in wood, or metal angle iron. Intermediate posts at 6ft-8ft intervals will also be needed. Strong galvanised wires are then run across the posts, at 18in-24in height intervals, to which the developing side branches can be tied. For a more firm effect, tie long bamboo canes to the wires and attach the branches to these.

This structure may not seem the sort of thing you want in a garden, but it is surprising how soon it becomes hidden in foliage. And after a few years, the wires and posts can be removed and just the canes left in place.

If an even lighter screen is



The common lime (*Tilia europaea*) is malleable and well suited to training along a framework into attractive archways and tunnels

required, you might consider an espalier tree, of say lime (*Tilia platyphyllos* or *euchlora*). In this case the spacing is widened to 6ft-8ft intervals. Instead of letting a twiggy hedge develop on the stilts, the twigs are pruned off the side branches every year, leaving a clean, formal skeleton.

Lime twigs are malleable and well suited to training. They can even be trained into archways and tunnels, and the best to use are the common lime (*T. europaea*) or *T.*

platyphyllos 'Rubra', whose red twigs will glisten in the winter sun before being pruned off in March.

Training limes this way is not difficult. There are none of the complications of pruning espalier fruit trees or bud wood. It only requires care to ensure that the formal framework is attractively grown. If there is one watchword in this, it is to ensure that the structure of posts and wires is strong enough to last, and to allow you to draw the wires tight enough to be straight.

WEEKEND TIPS

- Pot-up or replant hippeastrums in a soil-based compost, such as John Innes No 2, and keep fairly dry until growth starts.
- Cut back ivy and creepers on house walls to the roof line.
- Remove weak or crossing growth from hybrid tea and floribunda roses, but leave the final pruning until later.
- Erect training wires on walls, using vine eyes and tensioners.
- Early broad beans can be sown in individual pots under glass for spring planting. Watch out for mice.

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GARDEN ANSWERS



STEPHEN ANDERTON
replies to readers' letters

Q Where can I find the 'Madame Speaker' rose? Our garden centre has not heard of it, and another said sales were restricted because it is a new rose. — Rev C. Earle, Ware, Hertfordshire.

A There are two main sources for anyone having trouble finding a rose variety. One is the Royal National Rose Society, Chiswell Green, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL2 3NR (01727 850461). The other is a booklet called *Find That Rose*, produced yearly by the British Rose Growers' Association and available from the RNRS for £2.50, including p&p. 'Madame Speaker' — a hybrid tea rose, dark red and bordered with cream and yellow — is indeed new and will be available at B&Q from this autumn.

Q Last August I excavated the sediment from a large garden pond and spread it over a wide area. It has dried out well, is friable, 2ft-3ft deep in places, and has a pH of between 6.5 and 7. It is surrounded and shaded by oaks. I would like to plant the area with rhododendrons and azaleas, but I am unsure when the sediment will be ready for planting. — F.J. Pervin, High Halden, Kent.

A Plant in March. Rhododendrons and azaleas will love that acid or neutral soil. Dredged silt from ponds with trees nearby usually has enough leaf and twig material in it to produce a coarse, open textured soil, despite the fine particles of the silt proper. By March the silt will have had ample chance to settle. Check the plants in autumn to see if irregular settlement has left them either too high or too low in the soil and adjust accordingly. Is the land under the silt area acidic? If not, worm action may bring alkaline soil up into the silt and raise the pH until it becomes unsuitable for rhododendrons. But that is many years away.

HOW TO GET RID OF A MOLE IN A HOLE

AFTER musical deterrents (Weekend, December 21, 1996), B. Young, of East Grinstead, West Sussex, writes to recommend pushing castor oil plant seeds into mole runs, having tried most other methods. Apparently the moles dislike either the smell or blundering into the sharp spikes on the seeds. I cannot help wondering if, on the contrary, they like the smell and eat these poisonous seeds. Anyone wishing to try this will find that, in the south at least, you can grow the flower seed of *Ricinus communis*, the castor oil plant, a tender shrub widely used as a bedding plant.

Q Having reduced by two-thirds a robust Lavatera 'Barnsley', I read with horror that they revert to the common pink when pruned severely. Is this always the case? I had planned to move it this winter and wonder if it is now worth doing? — K. Argovic, London W4.

A Lavateras are prolific flowering shrubs, but must be pruned or they get straggly. With or without pruning they are not long lived, up to five to six years. Snow, or cold usually finish them off. The common *Lavatera alba* is insistently purplish pink, and 'Barnsley' (now thought to be a hybrid) was one of the first of the many softer-coloured variations. It tends to revert, with or without heavy pruning, though the problem is sometimes more common after heavy pruning. So wait and see, and take some cuttings next summer anyway, of a true branch, to keep you going. As a general rule, it is better to leave the hard-pruning of sappy, short-lived shrubs until later in the spring.

Q I have several pots of the succulent *Crasula portulaca* and the red-flowered *Kalanchoe blossfeldiana*, which regularly produce new plants from fallen leaves. How do they do this? — A. Challoner, Bodewydan, Denbighshire.

A These succulent plants come from dry conditions where water is scarce. So they store their own in the leaves and can survive long periods without water. It is safer for a species to rely on leaf knocked off by a passing animal taking root than to wait for seed and rain to coincide.

Q Readers should write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. We regret that it may not be possible to deal with every request. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. The Times also regrets that any enclosures cannot be returned.

With the huge Witley Court fountains being restored, Jane Owen investigates back-garden models



Barbara Davies of Stapley Water Gardens, Cheshire, which sells this huge bronze fish gusher at £4,000 along with modest equipment, such as pebbled water features, for small gardens

Make a splash this summer

The Fountain Society has designated the year 2000 as the Year of the Fountain and, in honour of this, English Heritage is restoring the fountains at Witley Court, near Stourport-upon-Severn in Worcestershire. For scale alone, they deserve to be brought back to public awareness.

Their renaissance will give an idea of Witley's glory days, when the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) was a regular guest. His host, the Earl of Dudley, asked the artist-landscaper William Nesfield to create gardens that would impress. They did and do.

The Poseidon fountain, which is almost shocking in its size — 8m (about 25ft) above the pool — is made in part from one of the largest monumental sculptures in Europe and the fountain reached 150ft. The Flora fountain is having to be recreated from scratch from a piece of limestone so vast that a quarry had to be closed for two days to blast it out.

Luckily, few of us are likely to face such problems when we want a water feature to enhance the balmy days of summer. Last year, thirsting for the sound and sparkle of moving water, I bought a spout and solar-powered pump from the local garden centre. How green, how romantic it would be.

Pump and nozzle went straight into the pond and a pleasing spout rose about 18in. Not in the Witley league, but the fountain had an excellence all of its own — until the sun moved. By the end of the day, the only way I could get the fountain to work was by standing between a row of broad beans and one of spinach, glass of sherry between my teeth, holding the solar panel above some trellis.

Clouds would cause the solar panel to jerk the water up and down. Walk past the panel and the fountain would momentarily stop. It was expensive, too, at £230, but it had the advantage of being able to work far away from any electric power point.

So unless, like Joseph Paxton at Chatsworth in Derbyshire or Nesfield at Witley, you are able to build lakes to create gravity-fed water spouts, you will have to make do with an electric pump.

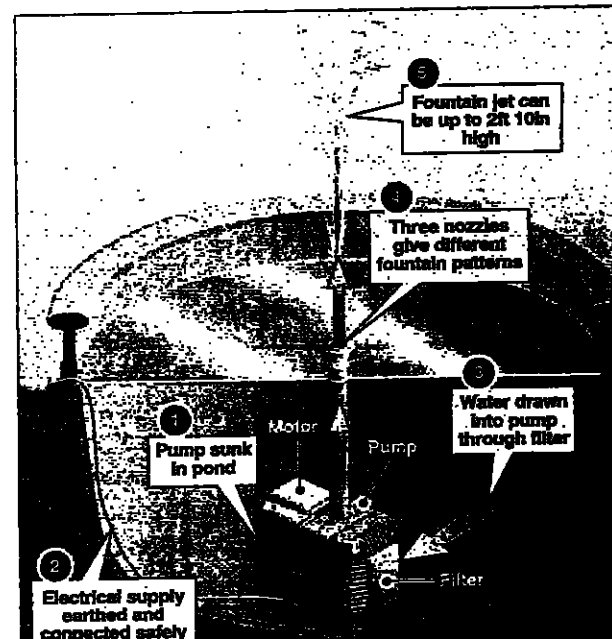
For my lesson in these things I turned to Barbara Davies, of Stapley Water Gardens, near Nantwich, in

Cheshire, which made an 18-acre buy-in for a lake to power the fountain at Castle Howard in North Yorkshire.

Stapley's main business is usually from more modest equipment: pebble water features which are designed for small spaces inhabited by children (add water and plug in) and DIY fountains which can be assembled in about 15 minutes — assuming you have an outside power supply.

For beginners, the best bet, and a popular product, is the Little Diamond pump kit, which comes with three interchangeable fountain heads (ball jet, single-tier spray ring and three-tier spray ring), a pump and 10m of cable. It costs about £50. Or you could buy one of last year's models, with 3m of cable for £35.

The cable from the power point to the pump needs to be hidden under plants around the pond or trellised in the ground: the latter method is safe because the kit comes with a circuit breaker, and an armoured cable should anyone attack it with a spade. The cable, already fixed to the pump, drops into the pond and, when the spout has been wedged into position, the power can be turned on. As the water emerges it is shaped by



How the Little Diamond model produces its fountain

If this does not satisfy your hunger for something magnificent for the millennium, move to somewhere with rolling acres and employ a fountain maker, who can be traced through the Fountain Society. On top of making a pretty, vast, impressive sculpture through which water will shoot into the air, he or she will calculate the pump size you need and install it.

the fountain head, and if you dislike those that come with the kit, most garden centres stock others — straight jet, spray jet, bubbly and multi-jet. Fish and aquatic plants coexist with the Little Diamond apart from water lilies and other sensitive plants which 'drown' when splashed.

Depending on how much your pond is, the water filter may have to be cleaned anything from every day to every week. A second, larger filter, costing £9.99, reduces the need to clean it so often. The larger pumps have better filters which usually reduce cleaning: debris-eating bacteria in the pond water colonise the filter and chomp through some of the muck. These cost from £25 to £200.

For those who aspire to scaled-down Witley water splendour, garden centres and specialist water nurseries have shapes and figures in stone, reconstituted stone, terracotta or cement designed to spout water. But for small spaces, wall-mounted, self-contained fountains are handy. Stapley's fake-stone 30in-high lion mask fountain and trough costs £112.99, including the pump.

Cheshire, which made an 18-acre buy-in for a lake to power the fountain at Castle Howard in North Yorkshire.



The Poseidon fountain

FACT FILE

- Garden fountain specialists and stockists include: Hozelock, Haddenham, Aylesbury, Bucks HP17 8JD (01844 292002); Lotus Water Gardens, Cheshire, PO Box 36, Junction Street, Burnley, Lancashire BB12 0NA (01282 420771); Stapley Water Gardens, London Road, Stapley, Nantwich, Cheshire CW9 7JH (01270 623868); Wildwood Water Gardens, Theobalds Park Road, Crews Hill, Enfield, Middlesex EN2 9BP (0181-366 0243).
- The Fountain Society, 16 Gayfere Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3EP (0171-222-2917), membership £20 a year.
- Witley Court (01299 896630), ten miles northwest of Worcester on A443, open Wednesdays to Sundays until March 22, 10am-4pm. 24pm, £2.50.

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CHANGING TIMES

Weeds perish in deadly gun battle

If chemicals are taboo and hoeing is hard, try a flame gun, says Stephen Anderton

Have you ever looked at a spring vegetable patch covered in a haze of tiny, thrusting weed seedlings and wish you could wipe them out without resorting to chemicals or the hard work and uncertainty of a hoe? If so, think about getting a flame gun.

These guns are ideal for burning off seedlings where there are no other plants nearby which might be damaged by the heat. A blast of flame is delivered from the end of a hand-held lance and, if it is used while the weeds are still seedlings, a complete kill is achieved.

Flame guns can also be used on gravel paths and drives as an alternative to residual weedkillers. Now that several such weedkillers previously used have been banned, many local authorities are turning to flame and steam to control weeds on public areas and pavements.

For domestic use, there are two kinds of flame guns: the old-fashioned but splendidly powerful paraffin type, and the cleaner, easier, gas-powered type. The paraffin type has been around for generations and works rather like a big blowlamp on a long handle. Paraffin is delivered under pressure to a nozzle and is first vapourised by

passing through flame-heated coils of tubing. Consequently, the gun has to be primed, by putting a burning rag soaked in paraffin into the coils first. It's a bit messy but once it's going it is a powerful tool.

The gun's whosh factor is decidedly useful and, if you want to burn off an area of rough grass which has already been killed by herbicides, the thrust of the paraffin flame will lift the dead grass to burn it away down to ground level.

Paraffin guns are best for big areas, because once they are up and running, there is no on/off switch. If you stop it you have to prime it again to restart. The paraffin-fuelled Sheen Flame

Gun, at £119.50, including p&p. A lance is connected by a 7m (about 21ft) hose to a large gas cylinder (not supplied). The jet is ignited by a pilot light, so the burner can easily be turned on and off for convenience and economy. The gun's whosh factor is good, but



Paraflex Weed Wand, £35

Gun is sold through the Organic Gardening Catalogue, at £149.50, including p&p. An optional hood is available for confining the flame at £22.99. My experience is that a hood also concentrates the heat and makes the gun more effective in windy weather.

The OG Catalogue also offers a Wand: Gas Flame Gun, at £119.50, including p&p. A lance is connected by a 7m (about 21ft) hose to a large gas cylinder (not supplied). The jet is ignited by a pilot light, so the burner can easily be turned on and off for convenience and economy. The gun's whosh factor is good, but

perhaps not as powerful as in the paraffin gun. The lance weighs only 3kg (6.6lb), making it lighter than a paraffin gun, particularly with a full fuel tank. But then, after you have burned a patch within a 7m radius, the butane cylinder itself must be humped along to a new position.

If all this sounds like too much hard work, there is the lightweight Paraflex Weed Wand, which has a small screw-in gas canister and can be held easily in one hand. It is lit by a piezo electric spark and produces a small flame ideally suited for spot treatment of weeds, or cleaning cracks in paving.

The gun's whosh factor is negligible, but a still dry day considerably increases efficiency. The Weed Wand is made by M.H. Berlyn and is available from garden centres, big multiples, or hardware stores, at about £35. The makers expect to launch a larger, semi-professional model later in the year at about £75, with a motorised trolley and gas cylinder, 2m gas hose and piezo ignition.

■ Organic Gardening Catalogue, Cobbe Lane, Hove, Brighton, BN1 6PU (01273 810032, 810033).

■ Paraflex, M.H. Berlyn, Dudley Road, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 3LR (0121-550 1951) for stockists.

WEEKEND SATURDAY JANUARY 25 1997

Ideal homes at the press of a button

Furnishing stores are turning to computers to give customers a "real" picture of how their new carpet, kitchen or bathroom could look when in place. Wallcoverings, and even paint colours, are included in some on-screen packages being developed and tested.

The new images produced are a far cry from the computer-generated sketches or floor plans that some retailers in the kitchen market have been using for a decade or more. Computers can now produce photo-quality colour pictures of fittings and superimpose them on to a photograph of a room. For example, Allied Carpets' HomeVision service allows you to see on-screen how various different floor coverings would look if they were laid in particular rooms.

At the push of a few buttons, the system can show a photo-image of a typical room, selected from a library of shots, and roll out your chosen carpet in that setting. If you don't like the look of it, you can choose another carpet (or another room) and repeat the process until you are happy.

Sales staff can also prompt the system to select floor coverings which fit your requirements: for example, green bedroom carpet with a small pattern. In all cases, the image you see includes texture and shadow-effects. You can also change the lighting conditions to match those in your home.

If you want to take the process a step further, you can have photographs of your rooms installed on the computer system. You can then view the carpets in their "real" setting. This service from HomeVision costs £75, refunded if you buy a floor covering.

HomeVision was launched last August in Guildford, Surrey, and is installed in 12 stores in the south-east of England. Allied Carpets is planning to go national with the service this year.

You are also likely to see similar systems in DIY stores by the end of the year, systems which allow you to paint the walls or hang wallpaper on-screen. Interactive Colour Solutions, which developed the HomeVision system, is working with various manufacturers to

How would the
sitting room look
in yellow? Or
peach perhaps?

There are ways of
finding out...

produce a computer package that gives on-screen viewing of everything from doorknobs to paint in room settings.

Meanwhile, Crown Wallcoverings has completed trials of Wallpaper Wizard, a touch-screen computer system that allows you to visualise all types of wallcoverings, from textured wallpaper to paint, in a range of home settings.

DIY chains, including Homebase, B&Q, Do It All and F&S, were involved in computer trials for most of last year and are now evaluating the results. Depending on their verdict, Wallpaper Wizard could eventually be installed in up to 300 DIY stores, says John Lawrence, the new-business manager at Crown Wallcoverings.

As well as dealing with walls and floors, photo-quality computer images are being used by retailers to show how fitted furniture will look when it is in place. A photo-realism system called Planit, developed by ICADS, can be used to design kitchens, bedrooms, bathrooms, living rooms and conservatories. About 1,000 copies of the system have been installed by independent retailers, chiefly as an aid to kitchen design. It is also used by leading retail groups, such as Ikea, John Lewis, Wickes and MFI.

Planit can design a kitchen within minutes, using the retailer's stocked range of units. The initial drawings are of draft quality, which allows the system to work fast — changing selections at the click of a button. Planit will also add up the cost of the furniture and produce an itemised quote. And, once you're happy with the draft picture and price, the system will



Mike Hardman, of ICADS, demonstrates computer-aided home design. Right, computer print-outs from HomeVision showing different floor coverings in the same room

re-draw the image using photo-realism, producing an image that can be printed out for reference.

Of course, photo-quality images, although impressive, are simply a fast, effective advancement on the "artist's impression". They're useful but, in terms of three-dimensional design, it is virtual reality that is at the cutting edge of computer-aided planning, because it allows you to "walk through" a room and to get a feel for how the whole thing works.

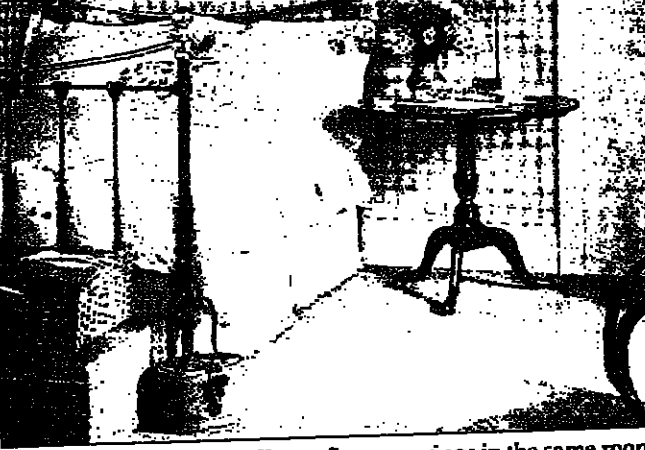
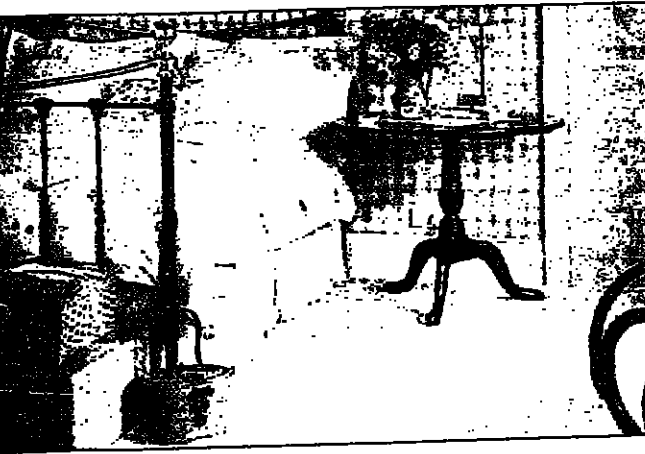
This is important in kitchen design, where the relative positioning of units and appliances is the

key," says Mike Hardman, of ICADS, who has been involved in developing a virtual-reality kitchen and bathroom design package. The system lets you "explore" a room, viewing it from any angle, opening cupboards, even lighting the oven or filling the bath. The image is of draft quality but ICADS expects to launch an improved version later this year.

Computer virtual reality has also been developed by the specialist software company M'n'G Designs, which has just launched an addition to its existing Superfast Plus programme — a design package

used by more than 1,000 high street stores and kitchen suppliers throughout Britain. Using draft-quality images, the programme allows the viewer to interact with the design. "Virtual reality lets you see what the designer has in mind," says Maurice Green, the managing director of M'n'G Designs. "For example, you can open drawers and doors to make sure nothing in the house clashes."

As for the future, virtual reality and photo-realism are likely to gain popularity, and the trend won't stop with interior design. In America, retailers already use computer



FACT FILE

- For stores providing HomeVision, contact Allied Carpets on 01689 895000.
- Retailers using Planit by ICADS (01233 635844) include Ikea, John Lewis, Graham Group, MFI and Wickes.
- Superfast Plus by M'n'G Designs (0161-477 0700) is used by small high street retailers.
- Wallpaper Wizard by Crown Wallcoverings (01254 870700) has been tested in Do It All, Homebase, B&Q and F&S.

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SURREY — Dorkenfield Price Guide: £495,000

A fascinating conversion of a former east-house with spacious accommodation in a rural situation between Farnham and Dorkenfield. 4 beds, 2 baths, gallery hall, 4 receptions, kitchen, utility room, cinema, shower room/sauna, garage, gardens of about 0.2 ha (0.5 acre). FARNHAM: 01252 737115

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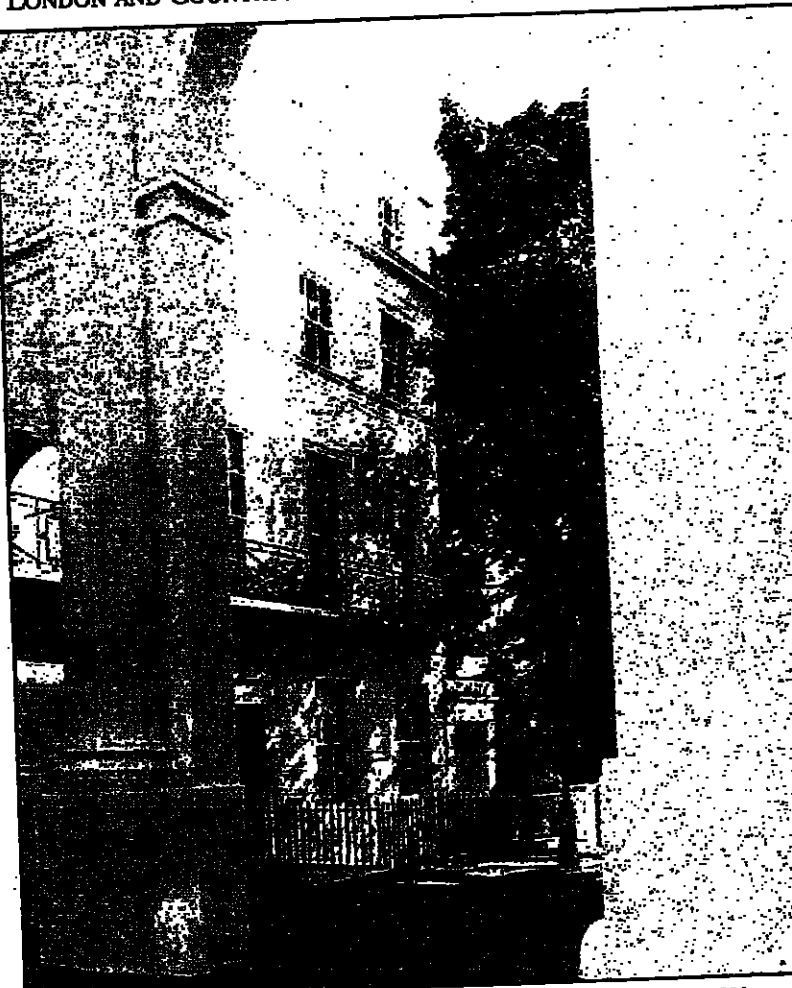


DALEBURY ROAD, SW17

In a tree-lined street, a double-fronted Victorian house with a south facing garden of 11.6m x 10.2m (38ft x 33ft). 5 beds, bath, shower rm, 4 receptions, kitchen, 2 conservatories, utility rm, cellar, loft.

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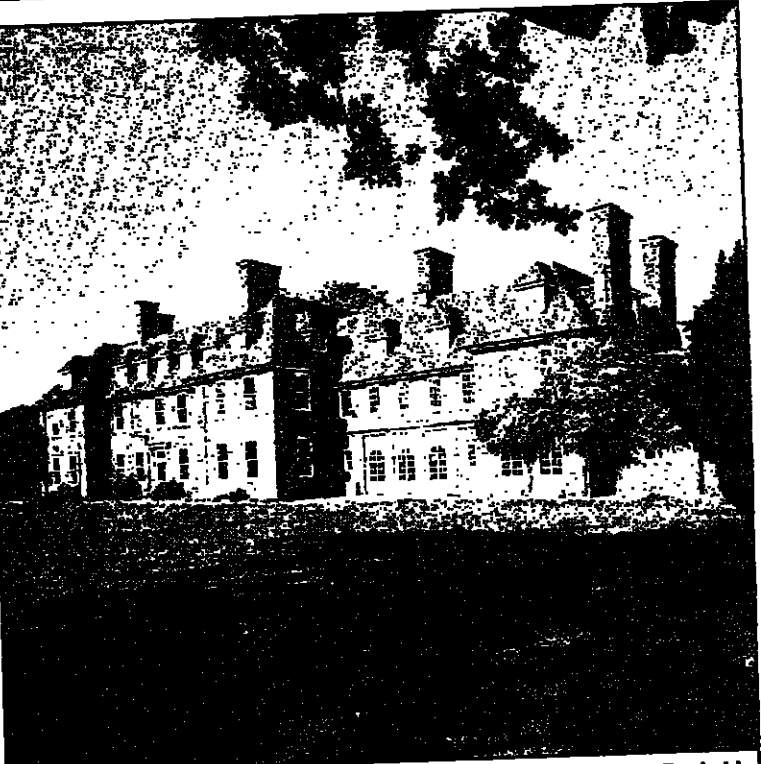
REGENT'S PARK, NW1 Crown Estate Lease to 2060 £1,300,000 In a grand Nash terrace facing west across the Park, a lovely house on five floors with a private lift and garage. 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, shower room, dressing room/study, 3 receptions, kitchen, 2 staff bedrooms, cloakroom, storage, resident parking, communal garden. ST JOHN'S WOOD: 0171-722 5556

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WESTBRIDGE ROAD, SW11

Presented in good order, a ground floor flat in a block built in the mid 1980s just south of Battersea Bridge. Bed, bath, reception, kitchen. Two freehold parking spaces are available by separate negotiation.

Share of freehold £89,500

BATTERSEA: 0171-228 0174



Countrymen, lend me your house

Renting rural properties is one of the fastest-growing sectors of the housing market

The whole property market seems to be putting its green wellies on. It's only January but already country rentals have emerged as one of the fastest growing sectors of the housing market.

Penny Parr-Head of Hamptons International estimates that the rural rental market is experiencing a boom greater than that of the London equivalent.

The main reason is that the number of people looking to rent doubled between 1995 and 1996, while the number of new properties coming onto the market fell by 28 per cent.

Children are usually one of the biggest factors in enticing people out of the cities. Many would-be rural renters feel that the country provides access to better schools as well as more space and a better quality of life for their young ones.

Barbara Blanchard, of John D. Wood's country rental department, confirms this. "Typical clients looking for a country rental are a young professional couple with children," she says. "They have done the whole London thing and have decided that it is time to move to the country."

For Mark and Julia Shirley, who have three children — Max, six, Amelia, three, and Milo, one — this was instrumental in their decision to sell their house in Balham, south London and move to a five-bedroom house on an estate near Winchester.

Mr Shirley says: "Now we can let the children play outside and we know that they will be safe — that's something we would never have dreamt of doing in London."

However, Mr Shirley was quick to discover the most obvious disadvantage of moving to the country. Facing a 90-minute journey morning and evening to his job in the City, he admits: "In the summer it is fine, but in the winter it can be dreadful. I leave at 6.30am and get home at 7.30pm. It is dark when I set off and dark when I get home."

The Shirleys decided to rent in the country as a stop-gap while looking for the right house to buy, and they are not alone. Hamptons estimates that 36 per cent of its applicants have turned to the rental market as a temporary alternative to buying.

For those looking to buy outside the capital, prices are expected to rise by 10 per cent in 1997. This prediction comes from Simon Agace, the chairman of the London agent Winkworth, the only property expert to accurately predict the



Mark and Julia Shirley with their children outside their rented house. "We can let the children play outside, something we would never have dreamt of doing in London"

extent of the boom in property in 1996. Mr Agace compares the 10 per cent price rise in the country with only a 7 per cent increase for central London.

The lack of good properties seems to be the main reason. Strutt & Parker in Lewes has more than 1,000 prospective purchasers competing for ten houses in the £250,000 range. Naturally, the few houses available are selling for sums well above the guide price.

But the buying market in the country is also limited because often the most desirable rural properties — farmhouses, stables and old staff cottages — are on country estates. Landowners are reluctant to sell these properties, preferring to rent them instead, so keeping their estates in one piece.

Ms Parr-Head of Hamptons says: "As people turn to rentals in ever-increasing numbers,

the result is an enormous strain on the available rental property. Inevitably we will see more rent increases, frustrated applicants, gazumping and landlords becoming ever more choosy about who they accept as tenants."

Surprisingly, "weekenders" form only a very small part of the picture. City dwellers in search of a second home in which to while away their weekends account for only 6 per cent of all applicants. According to Ms Blanchard of John D. Wood, these part-time country folk invariably insist that a gardener and housekeeper be included in the rental.

Company lets for overseas staff form the only other major part of the country rentals market, making up 32 per cent of all applicants. Companies

have finally realised the advantages of locating their staff outside the big cities, hoping that the quality of life in the country will produce better results from executives. Nor are companies entirely blind to the comparatively lower costs of country lets when compared to equivalent properties in London. For example, Hamptons is offering Byways, a modern village house built in traditional stone just outside the village of Painswick in the Cotswolds. The house has four bedrooms and the rent is £1,200 per month. At the same rent, and also in Gloucestershire, is the Old Granary in Brimsfield, a conversion with four bedrooms and two bathrooms.

Those looking for a less demanding commute to the capital might be interested in a pretty period cottage in Kingwood Common available through Hamptons' Henley on Thames office in Oxfordshire. The cottage has three bedrooms, two bathrooms and sizeable gardens. Fortunately for the reluctant horticulturist, the £1,500 per month rent includes the services of a gardener.

Children are a big factor in luring people out of cities

If a property does not quite meet a tenant's requirements, then changes can be made. There might be little point in landscaping the garden if your lease is only for 12 months, but by "amortising" the cost you can get a proper return on your investment — however long or short your stay in the property.

Essentially, amortising means devising a scale of depreciation for the asset — for example, an Aga — added by the tenant. If the tenant moves out before the Aga has depreciated to zero value, they can obtain a refund on some of their original outlay from the landlord because they will be the one to benefit from the improvement to the property.

Now it seems that everyone wants their own little piece of our ever-dwindling English countryside. As the exodus from our cities gathers momentum in 1997, the obstacles facing those in search of a rural idyll are

becoming more substantial. Only those who can fight their way through rent increases, gazumping, choosy landlords and stiff competition will finally be rewarded with their place in the country.

ADAM BARKER

John D. Wood Country Rentals, 01295 398204, Hamptons Country Rentals, 0171 824 2312, Strutt & Parker, Lewes, 01273 475411.

PROPERTY NEWS

HAZEL HOLT in Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire is for sale. On May 23, 1892, *The Times* described the late Victorian house as "a favourable opportunity of securing a gentleman's residence of moderate size. The house is approached by an exceedingly pretty drive, with a lodge and particularly good and productive old grounds and walled gardens, maintained by one man and assistant." Now the estate and six-bedroom house with 49 acres are available as two lots costing £500,000 and £125,000 each. For more information, contact Knight Frank, 0171-629 8171 or Ian Judd and Partners, 01489 896422.

PRIME London residential rental values rose by 8.7 per cent for houses and 7.7 per cent for flats on average last year, says Savills. The highest rises were in Holland Park, Notting Hill and Kensington, with increases of 15 per cent for houses and 13 per cent for flats. Values rose by 5.6 per cent in Hampstead, Knightsbridge and areas of Docklands.

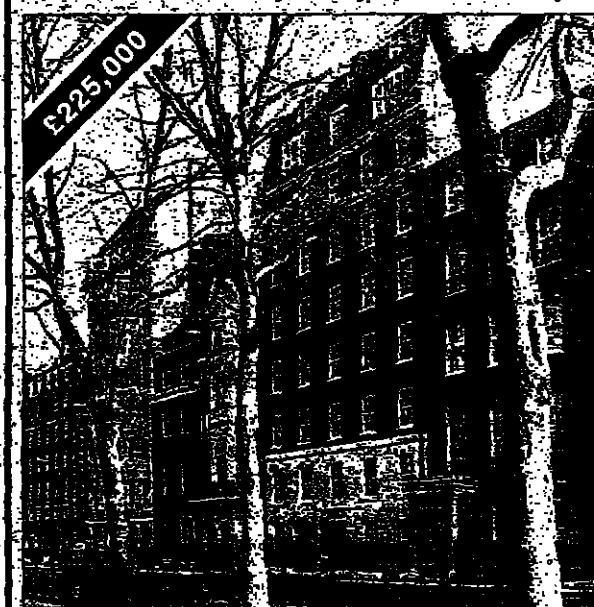
THE PEAK Cavern, a limestone cave with a 100ft-wide entrance in Castleton, Derbyshire is to let through Smiths Gore. Owned by the Duchy of Lancaster, it was dubbed one of the "marvels of England" in the 12th century by Henry of Huntingdon. The Duchy hopes tenants will attract a wider audience than the 28,000 who visit each summer. Price to be negotiated. For more information, ring 01904 655994.

HOUSE sales will continue to increase this year, according to the Corporate Estate Agents' Property Index. The number of sales in 1996 was up 15.3 per cent on the previous year, with sales in the fourth quarter of last year 20.6 per cent higher than the same period in 1995, while the number of contracts exchanged rose by 29 per cent.

AMANDA LOOSE

HOMESWAP

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SELLING POINTS CONSERVATORIES



A conservatory adds value to a house, provided it blends in well and is properly built

Three bedrooms, two reception rooms, kitchen, bathroom, gas central heating and... a conservatory. Just one extra room but enough to give a hint of gracious living to your house's otherwise prosaic particulars.

As property accessories, conservatories are pretty hot. They are just for relaxing with a gin fizz surrounded by potted palms or indulging horticultural fantasies, tending bougainvillea and passion flowers while the rain drips outside and the temperature drops.

On a more practical note, a conservatory can be a valuable additional and adaptable space. Provided it is well built, it can boost the value of a house. And in smaller houses, where it adds significantly more space, you may more than recoup your investment.

Conservatories have come a long way since the days of sun lounges that were often just glorified sheds with plastic roofs, tacked on to the back of a house. But with the range of styles now available, from Regency swirls to Victorian gothic, do not expect to impress potential housebuyers if your conservatory is little more than a covered space for the family wellies.

Today's homeowner wants a conservatory that is light, spacious, heated and doubled glazed to allow year-round use. Prospective housebuyers viewing in the depths of winter are not going to be sold on your garden room if they are hit by a glacial chill and the sight of frost-blackened plants. Nor will they be struck by its charms on a summer day if lack of ventilation

and shade has recreated Saharan conditions that leaves them gasping for air.

Even if your conservatory is not quite on the scale of Crystal Palace, you will want to show off its space and adaptability, and not have buyers tripping over abandoned bicycles and garden chairs. You may be using it as a children's play and general purpose room, but prospective buyers may have visions of candlelit dining while gazing out on the garden or of using it as a studio or office space.

Glassing in a roof terrace or perhaps enlarging a basement kitchen by adding a small conservatory-style extension adds a distinctive touch to town houses. A conservatory may also be a solution where extra space is needed but more substantial structural changes to the house are not possible.

It is important to make sure a conservatory blends with the house. Avoid the temptation of gothic fantasies complete with fussy finials, crests and roof lanterns if your house has a modern, no-nonsense look to it.

Prices start from about £5,000 for double-glazed conservatories with PVC frames, while timber-framed rooms start from about £6,000-£7,000. Planning permission is not always necessary, depending on the size of the conservatory, its location and what other additions may have been made to the house. On average, construction time is about 1-2 weeks.

CLARE STEWART

A commanding seaman's rest



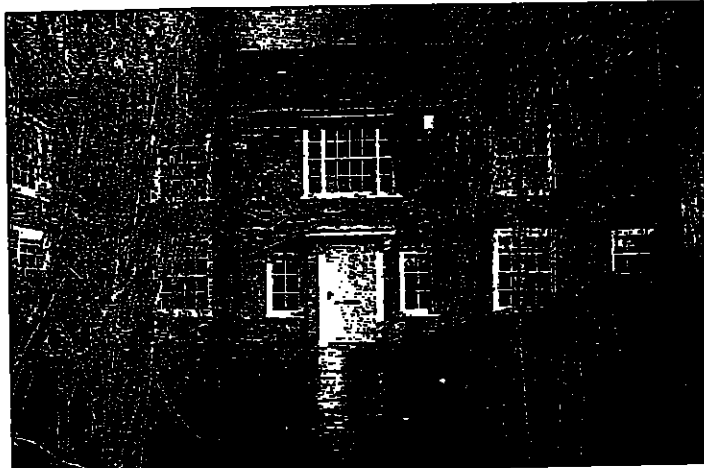
The imposing drawing room at Holmwood House is 30ft long

HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Holmwood House, King Street, Emsworth, Hants

- **Price:** £550,000
- **Shops:** Within walking distance — two grocers, two butchers, two churches, two betting shops and 19 pubs
- **Traffic:** King Street is a cul-de-sac so there is no through traffic
- **Entertainment:** Goodwood and Fontwell racecourses are within easy reach. Tidal and deep-water yacht berths nearby
- **Travel:** Chichester ten miles, Portsmouth 12, London 72. Trains to Waterlool and Victoria.

Nautical but nice:
three admirals
have lived at
Holmwood House
near an estuary



Emsworth, the harbourside town near Havant in Hampshire, is Captain Haddock territory. It is just the sort of place where you expect bearded types wearing Guernsey sweaters to use salty language and break into sea shanties. So it comes as a surprise to find a retired Admiral is selling his Georgian property (previous occupants have included a Vice-Admiral and a Rear-Admiral) nor that he likes Emsworth so much that he is moving into a smaller property 50 yards away in the same street.

Admiral Sir Richard Thomas, former Black Rod and retired seaman, stood outside the back door of his house to greet me as imposingly as he must have stood

on the decks of the vessels he commanded. And, after 22 years in Holmwood House, he admits that leaving will be as poignant as relinquishing command of a boat. From the ship's bell outside the back door to his Black Rod costume hanging in the hall, one has a strong sense of the man, naval and political. "Looking after a house is like keeping a ship in order," he says. "You have to have a proper system of maintenance." During

One of the few rooms that has no visual reference to his distinguished career — for the house is scattered with maritime and political memorabilia — is the kitchen. This exceeds even the usual estate agent superlatives for descriptions of size, given that it is about as large as my London flat. It is one of those sunny rooms with a huge fireplace

The graceful staircase, above, sweeps around in one-and-a-half revolutions to form a gallery

The front of Holmwood House, left, which has been extended from the original 17th-century farmhouse

and comfy chairs that you are loath to leave, and the family spend much of their time here. The kitchen table seats 14 comfortably and a large walk-in larder suggests that provisions for a crew of greedy people could be adequately stored.

A short passage leads to the hall where it is immediately clear why the estate agent prefers people to enter the house from the front. A graceful staircase sweeps around in one-and-a-half revolutions to form

a gallery. Off the hall, hung with seascapes, is the drawing room which is nearly 30ft long. The proportions of this room and the hall, which date from the mid-19th century, seem vast in comparison to the much smaller dining room and study. These were added in 1740 to what was a 17th-century farmhouse.

Of the six bedrooms, the master bedroom and the main guest bedroom dominate. The remaining three on the first floor are all about the same size, except perhaps for the discerning eye of a jealous sibling. The nicest bedroom, in my opinion, is the attic one, with its sloping walls and cupboards set in the eaves. It has a beautiful view over the garden to the mill pond. As the only room on this floor, it would make a good quiet study.

As the owner, I would keep the pavilion near the walled garden for my own use. An artist could stand their easel up in here looking out across the lawn at Dolphin Quay and the estuary, and in the winter they could light the fire.

One of the greatest assets of this property to its owner, its position near the water, is also attractive to visitors. The wall at the end of the garden has been kept low to preserve the view, but behind it runs a public towpath.

Some may find the prospect of heads bobbing at the end of the garden too close for comfort. There is compensation in the form of a hard-terms court on the lawn where an exhibition of terms may be enjoyed by the audience.

Sir Richard decided to buy the house more than two decades ago over a bottle of wine with a friend. "We thought two families could live here, but when it was clear the house would be difficult to divide fairly, I went ahead of the other chap and put in a bid," he says with satisfaction.


He considers the house to have an "elastic" capacity. "We had two wedding receptions for my daughters last year and a 50th wedding anniversary celebration as well as numerous large family parties," he says. As the father of eight children, when he says the house has survived wonderfully he knows what he is talking about.

KATHERINE BERGEN

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Unless we are prepared to support our rural shops, the supermarket juggernaut will inevitably kill off our small market towns

We must keep buying the jam tarts

DOWN TO EARTH



PAUL HEINEY

I bought the last jam tart that Mrs Runacles ever sold, which was a shame because it was also the first I had ever had from her. I opened the door of a tiny shop on the outskirts of a town not far from here, seeking refreshment after a long drive. In the window were two lonely jam tarts. I bought them both. On leaving the shop I noticed a scribbled sign on the door which said "Closing Down" and it gave that day's date. By the time I had eaten the tarts, the ovens of this tiny bakery were cooling, never to be relit.

So what? Does it matter that an elderly lady no longer had either the energy or the profit motive to spoon her home-made raspberry jam into hand-crafted pastry cases and offer them for sale? Probably not. Life has gone on without her, no one starved, she is probably enjoying her retirement.

We shall not see the likes of her again. The days when running a rural business meant little more than putting things in the window and expecting neighbours to beat a path to your door are long gone. This does not mean the village shop is

completely dead; there will always be wealthier communities who will fund-raise to support a post office, community shop or whatever. But, by and large, shops out in the sticks have had it.

You can blame Government policy, planning laws, paperwork, oppressive health and safety regulations; but in the end it is the customer's choice where to shop. If we did not support that little shop, why should it support us? I cannot be the only one round here who felt a twinge of conscience at the thought that if we had bought a few more tarts from Mrs Runacles and a few less from Mr Kipling, her bakery might still be there, run by a new generation.

If you accept it is the fault of all of us in rural areas that we have so few village shops left, is it not time we decided what we really think about the next swipe at rural life before it is too late? This time it is the future of small

market towns which hangs in the balance. I live not far from a typical one: no need to name it because what is happening here will be no different to what is happening in a small market town near you.

A few years ago the Wednesday livestock market closed. Farmers moved to the larger regional markets. The site was sold for a small supermarket development. This, surprisingly, was not the disaster some people feared. The location put it at the heart of the town, so it maintained a flow of

people down the high street. Only one general grocer closed as a result, and a butcher retired. But half a dozen traders still gathered on Wednesdays for a modest street market, and even when the recession bit, local businesses kept their heads just above water. So the butcher, baker, watchmaker, wool shop, newsagent,

coupled with the announcement of an application by Tesco to build a store there as well. Now, I like Tesco. You can turn your nose up at supermarkets if you like, but I will not. They are warm, clean, well stocked, and you can park the car.

Compare this with the nearby high street where the council charges you to park, paints yellow lines where there need be none, hands out parking tickets, and generally ensures you get wet and cold trudging from shop to shop. You need to be a saint to support the average high street these days.

However, I do try to support it because somewhere in a rural life there must be somewhere to which you are drawn, to meet other people, to get the buzz. That is what I do in this market town. I buy a paper, drink a cup of coffee, buy a packet of seeds, get my watch fixed, forget to pick up the dry cleaning. Four shops,

four people met, four "buzzes" acquired. Refreshed, I happily retreat to the solitary farmhouse life. Hundreds do what I do — usually on market day — and have done for generations.

With a glossy attraction up the road, however, convenience will inevitably outweigh sociability, the shops will close and the town will go silent. Bad news in the long run for its people, and their children especially: for what will any longer qualify this place to be a town? If high street shops fold, tea shops and pubs will follow, windows will be boarded up, buses will not bother to stop, no one will put up the Christmas lights.

If you know a small town where this has happened and you have successfully overcome the creeping death, I know of a row of splendid shopkeepers who will soon be dying to know how you did it. At the moment I fear for their future. Not only for their own sakes, but because I do not much fancy an environment in which supermarkets not only have charge of our pockets, but our hearts and minds, too. Keep buying those jam tarts, or there will be none for tea tomorrow.

Thorny problem? Call in the flying ponies

If plants and wildlife are threatened, the answer could be grazing, says Christian Dymond

Dartmoor ponies have returned to the Cornish cliffs near Padstow, so it must be the depths of winter. Transported from their normal habitat, on a Dartmoor estate owned by the Duchy of Cornwall, they will spend the next three months chewing through the bramble and gorse within sniffing distance of the Atlantic.

The eight pure-bred ponies are there for one purpose: to act as a nature conservation tool on 60 acres of the Pentire Peninsula belonging to the National Trust. In spring, when they might eat the young plants the Trust wants to encourage, the ponies will return home, a job well done.

Grazing animals have been part of the landscape for thousands of years but the idea of using certain breeds of cattle, sheep, goats or ponies to safeguard species of wildlife is a relatively new phenomenon, dictated by changes in agriculture since the war.

Before the war, marginal land would have been regularly grazed so wildlife thrived as a matter of course. Where land subsequently went out of grazing and was not used for anything else, scrub tended to return. The only way to maintain the botanical and insect life was to start grazing again.

The Dartmoor ponies on the Pentire Peninsula are seen as the ideal animal for the purpose. "They're hardy, able to cope with poorer ground, light enough not to do damage to the footpaths and good on their feet on the steep slopes," says Simon Ford, the National Trust's countryside manager for north Cornwall.

"They'll leave the heather but graze the more competitive species like bramble and blackthorn. This allows grassland species like sawwort, slender birdsfoot and trefoil to grow much more easily. The small pearl-bordered fritillary, small copper and green hairstreak butterflies are returning in numbers too. After seven years it has become clear that grazing has led to enormous benefits in terms of the wildlife here," he adds.

The National Trust manages 38 nature conservation grazing schemes in Cornwall where animals are selected by the Trust according to their suitability for the job. Hence

16 different breeds of sheep are used elsewhere at Pentire including Swaledale, Soay, Shetland and Jacob.

These sheep — light on their feet and suited to the weather — graze the maritime grassland, creating short grass which should be rich in flowers. There is also an important iron age castle here, called the Rumps, which heavier animals could damage.

Sometimes troubleshooting sheep are brought in for only a month and then moved to other sites. One "flying flock" of 200, including Hebrideans and Shetlands, is employed by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust to clear coarse vegetation so that finer grasses, heather and wild flowers can flourish.

Older and unusual breeds of animal are much favoured for conservation work because they are hardier, more suited to rougher vegetation and do not require the large amounts of nutrients that more modern breeds need. On the Isle of Wight, for instance, one of the most successful conservation tools in the armoury of the National Trust has been the feral goat.

Introduced five years ago — the goats were originally brought from north Devon but now belong to the National Trust — the animals spend the whole year browsing 100 acres of Trust-owned land at Bonchurch Down near Ventnor.

Tony Tutton, the island's National Trust property manager, says: "A lot of the unimproved chalk grassland on the island is in danger of encroachment from wild privet, holm-oak, bramble and blackthorn. The holm-oak is particularly intrusive but the 60-odd feral goats control all the scrub, and in so doing allow plants like salad burnet, horseshoe vetch, stemless thistle, early gentian and rock-rose to flourish."

Fifteen New Forest ponies are used on 80 acres of heath at Lucombe Down, north of Bonchurch, where in the 1980s two very cold winters killed off all the gorse. The ponies nibble the grass which has come back into these bare areas, encouraging heather to spread. Insects here are eaten by the rare Dartford warbler, which depends on the heather. In England, out of 180



The National Trust uses Dartmoor ponies as a nature conservation tool on the Pentire Peninsula in Cornwall. Elsewhere goats, sheep and cattle perform a similar function

National Nature Reserves, grazing takes place on 108. English Nature actually manages — directly or indirectly — most of these reserves. Some of the sites it owns itself, some it leases from farmers and landowners and there are others where management is retained by the landowner but under an agreement with English Nature. Managing means looking after the whole estate, its habitats and species. Maurice Massey, English Nature's management co-ordinator, says: "We have our own stock for grazing but the norm is for the reserves to be grazed under

licence by other people. We come to an agreement with the farmer about which animals are best for the job, where they graze and for how long during the year to achieve the nature conservation interest."

"Sometimes grants are made to the farmer to assist with positive management of the site — hundreds or thousands of pounds — but payments vary from site to site and depend on how much the farmer's aims and our aims correspond."

There is one footnote to this story. This type of grazing has given a huge shot in the arm

for rare breeds like Soay, Hebridean and Manx Loghnan sheep and minority cattle breeds like Dexter, Longhorn and Belted Galloway.

As Peter Kling at the Rare Breeds Survival Trust says: "Conservation grazing has been a splendid way of demonstrating the part that these breeds can play in farming in the future."

● National Trust, North Cornwall Countryside office: 01208 863046; National Trust, Isle of Wight: 01983 526445; English Nature (inquiries service): 01733 455101; Rare Breeds Survival Trust 01203 696551.

PETER BROWN



AMONG a flock of black-headed gulls out on a playing field, you sometimes notice a gull that looks slightly different. It is a little taller, and when it walks it does not waggle its bottom in the ungainly way the others do.

Look a little closer, and further differences become apparent. Whereas the black-headed gulls have red legs and beaks, in this bird they are yellow-green. It lacks the dark mark behind the eye that the black-headed gulls have in winter, and although, like them, it has black wings, in this bird they are flecked with white "mirrors". It is like a small herring gull, except that its beak is not so ferocious-looking.

Rather surprisingly, this bird is called a common gull. In fact, it is only common in the summer in Scotland. Over most of the British Isles, it is far outnumbered in the winter by the black-headed gulls. There are about three million of these here in January and February, and only about 700,000 common gulls.

In both species, a large majority of these wintering birds are immigrants from continental Europe, and will go back there to breed in the spring. We shall be left with getting on for half a

Nothing common about these gulls

FEATHER REPORT

million pairs of black-headed gulls (which by then will actually have their black heads), and perhaps 70,000 pairs of common gulls.

I always like spotting a common gull among its commoner relatives. It has such a delicate, refined air as it stands there. In fact, it can scream and squall above a rubbish dump with the best of them, in hard weather.

However, more often in the winter it is found in ones or twos with other species of gull, or else in flocks out on certain kinds of farmland. Large flocks are sometimes found on ploughland, but they like best to feed on pastures grazed by sheep or cattle, and are especially attracted to chalky uplands,

where they find abundant earthworms in the soil beneath the grass.

In the evening they will fly a long way to roost, settling down rather restlessly for the night on estuaries or reservoirs. En route they fly steadily and gracefully. They can also be quite acrobatic when swooping down on a field or a stretch of water. One has even been seen looping the loop on the way down.

Next month the residents and the winter visitors will both start making their way north to their breeding grounds, and for a while they will be seen everywhere in Britain. But by the spring, there will be very few left in England or Wales.

Odd pairs are found breeding south of the Border every year, particularly in the Isle of Anglesey and along the Kent coast. These lonely couples are thought to be continental birds that did not go home. But in summer most of the British nesters will be up on the Scottish moors.

They nest by the sea and near lochs, making a scrape for their eggs on islets and sandbanks, on dry patches in bogs, or high up on the moorland slopes.

On the hillsides these white birds can be seen from a long way off, sitting on their nests among the stones and grass and the springing heather. For common gulls, they are always uncommonly beautiful.

DERWENT MAY

● What's about: Birders — Listen for the drumming sound of great-spotted woodpeckers.

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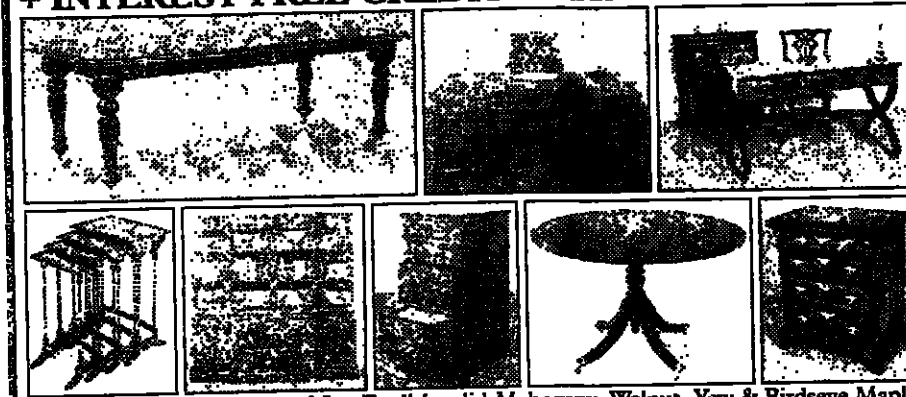
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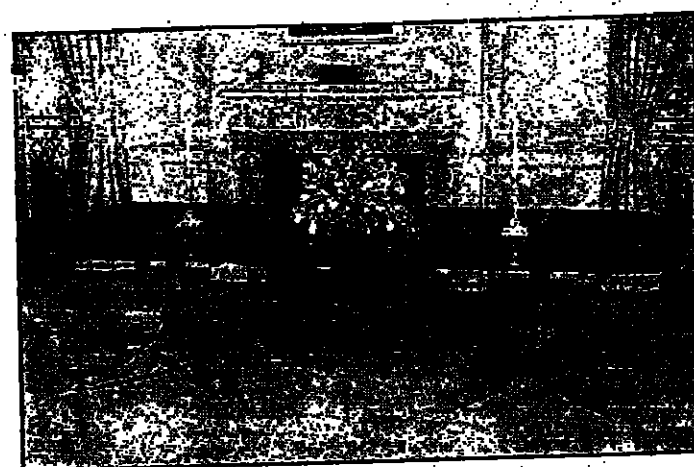
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Key issues in muscular skeletal physiotherapy, P81. Butterworth-Heinemann Oxford.

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■ "TENS should be considered as a simple, safe and reusable first line treatment for many pain conditions. It can be used long term with no risk of serious adverse effects." Johnson M.J., Ashton C.H., Thompson J.W., (1992) Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine Vol. 85, 267-268.

■ "Electrical stimulation is a clinically established method of relieving pain" Pain Relief Foundation, Walton Hospital, Liverpool

■ Professor Ashton of Newcastle University ran tests comparing the results of using TENS and comparing it with Aspirin. Her work showed that TENS had a more significant effect on the nerves being studied.

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■ A study at the University of Miami found that TENS in addition to being useful in short term, had a long term benefit for pain sufferers. This group also found improved function and quality of life as well as reduced use of medicines.

■ There have been over 200 research studies published worldwide on TENS since 1991.

■ The University of Colorado found that 83% of Patients experienced fair to excellent relief with only 17% being considered "failures".

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One of the latest methods of controlling pain that seems to bring considerable relief to many is called the "gate theory". First propounded in the 1950s by British neuroscientist, Patrick Wall and Canadian psychophysicist, Ronald Melzack. After spending ten years researching the subject at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA, Wall and Melzack concluded that our perception of the sensation of pain involves two types of nerve fibre, each of which sends conflicting messages to the brain via the spinal cord.

Apparently, one type of fibre carries the "hurt" or pain message to the brain, while the other, thicker type is capable of acting in a contradictory way by blocking out (or "gating") the "hurt" signal, thereby preventing its transmission to the brain.

In fact, acupuncture and pain-killers both work on this "gate" theory to alleviate pain. As does Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS), which is now being employed with increasing success in NHS Hospitals and Clinics throughout the UK. Utilising precisely the same effective principle, researchers found that TENS produces an intense stimulation which activates an area of the brain which, in turn, inhibits the pathways that transmit pain signals. Although it is not a cure, TENS is now accepted by the medical profession as being of significant benefit to many in controlling any kind of physical pain. While TENS has a remarkably wide range of applications - it has proven to be successful in alleviating pain associated with a variety of ailments - it seems to work better when the area of pain is localised rather than general.

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Seven out of ten in the UK die without a Will

Few people expect to pass away in the near future - most of us have every expectation of going on for years. Perhaps this is the reason seven out of ten people in this country die without ever making a Will.

There are other reasons of course. Will making is often thought to be time-consuming and complicated - this is not always the case. Sometimes there are issues which are difficult to discuss with family members.

Others assume that, even without a Will, when they die, their wife or husband automatically inherits all their money and possessions.

Not true.

Making a Will - and keeping it up to date - is essential to safeguard your loved ones.

If you are married, your property may not necessarily pass in its entirety to your husband or wife, unless you make a Will leaving him or her everything.

If you are unmarried, none of your property will pass to your surviving partner unless you make a Will.

If you die without leaving a Will, the law provides that certain relatives, including brothers, sisters, parents, cousins, aunts and uncles might be entitled to your estate. It leaves a horrible mess - at a time when the people you leave behind, and hoped to be able to support, are least able to cope.

When you marry, any Will you made previously may become null and void. If you divorce, any provision made for your previous spouse is cancelled. The birth of a child or a death in the family could mean you should amend an existing Will. A significant increase or reduction in the value of your personal assets could require an amendment to any existing Will. If you die without leaving a Will and you have no relatives, your entire estate will go to the government.

Making a Will - and keeping it up to date - is absolutely vital if you want to ensure that the needs of your loved ones are catered for in the event of your death.

Have you made a Will? Is your Will up to date?

WWF have published a free guide to Will making which outlines, clearly, the issues you need to bear in mind when preparing a Will and explains some of the more confusing jargon associated with Wills and bequests.

It also describes how you can go about making a bequest to charity - in particular WWF-UK.

Remember, having an out-of-date Will is little better than having no Will at all. This free booklet is essential reading if you care about your family and friends - it's also important for your own peace of mind.

So, send for your free guide today, which you can request by calling 01483 426445 or writing to Sally Burrows, Legacies Officer, WWF-UK, FREEPOST, Panda House, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1BR.

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Aromatherapy for animals? Ask the dog with travel sickness, the paranoid puss or the racehorse with sore shins

A sniff a day keeps vets away

Kristin Kosowan has been an animal aromatherapist for nearly seven years. ever since a patient asked for help to cure a Jack Russell terrier of travel sickness. From that casual inquiry, Ms Kosowan has seen her practice, Essentially Animals, in Marlborough, Wiltshire, grow into a full-time job, which takes her all over the country. She has treated horses, dogs, cats and other animals, including a bantam.

Aromatherapy is natural healing using highly concentrated extracts — called essential oils — taken from herbs, flowers and other plants. "Using plants to help healing is the oldest medicine in the world. If you think about it, it is going back to what animals used to graze on," Ms Kosowan says. By combining essential oils in the correct quantities, aromatherapy works holistically by promoting healing and health within the body. The application of a variety of oils, shampoos, lotions and poultices has helped her to cure a racehorse with sore shins brought about by galloping in training, a cat so timid that its answer to everything in life was to run away, and the reluctant travelling Jack Russell.

It is the ability to know which oils to blend and in what strengths that lies at the heart of the aromatherapist's work. Essential oils come in different strengths and with varying properties. A minute amount of some oils can be highly potent and need to be used sparingly. "Aromatherapy is not something you should attempt if you haven't been properly trained," Ms Kosowan says. "Even though all the products are natural, no natural product is 100 per cent safe."

"There are levels of safety and precautions must be taken but, once the appropriate preparation has been formulated, it is simple to use."

To provide some basic train-

ing for pet owners, Ms Kosowan, a science graduate, runs one-day aromatherapy workshops to demonstrate some of the natural ways of alleviating a wide range of mental and physical ailments, from skin, joint and respiratory problems to hormonal and behavioural problems. These are held monthly at venues around the country and cost £45 per person. There are separate workshops for cat and dog owners.

The bulk of Ms Kosowan's clientele come to her with "common ailments" such as fleas and ear mites, for which non-prescription treatment is available over the counter. More serious complaints usually find their way to her by way of a vet.

"Sometimes a vet will ring me when he's tried everything else. Others call because they have an open mind towards holistic healing." The British Veterinary Association supports the use of aromatherapy, describing it as "another tool in the kit bag with which to help cure animals".

In other cases, pet owners will often approach Ms Kosowan direct. "I always ask whether owners have talked to their vet and what they have said. I am not allowed to diagnose and I prefer to work alongside vets," she says.

Because she offers alternative therapies for animals, Ms Kosowan is subject to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 which states that only the owner, a vet or someone acting in consultation with a vet may treat an animal.

Having ascertained the problem, she will prescribe one of the many off-the-shelf aromatherapy remedies or custom-blend a lotion, which is then applied to a part of the animal where the hair is thinnest in order for the oils to be absorbed by the skin. Where the ailment is in a joint, the compound is applied directly. Other methods of healing include the use of special shampoos. Kismet, a cat

whose coat had lost its gloss, was treated with a peppermint tea tree shampoo made from oils mixed into a base.

Although the number of vets in Britain who also practise aromatherapy is small, the profession has taken a positive view of alternative therapies. Tim Couzens is a vet who has turned his back on conventional medicine and exclusively uses alternative methods at his holistic centre in East Sussex. His clients fall into two categories: those who believe in alternative medicine as a first choice and those who come as a last resort when all else has failed.

"Aromatherapy is just part of the practice. There can be times when I may not use it for weeks," he says. In keeping with the ethos of holistic medicine, Mr Couzens combines his knowledge with homeopathy, herbalism and other natural methods.

Where appropriate, he may take more than one approach. And he sometimes lets the animals sniff the oils and select the ones they prefer and so consequently need. He guards against a mint-loving horse choosing oil of peppermint by offering the animals an appropriate selection.

"I let them smell maybe four or five oils and that works out as a fairly reliable guide to what oils they need," says Mr Couzens, who charges £48-£50 for an initial hour-long consultation. Prospective clients should also take into account the cost of treatment oils. These can vary considerably depending on the oils used.

Ms Kosowan makes no charge for her consultations but sells a range of lotions, creams and shampoos which start at £4.50 and rise to £15.

BRENDAN MARTIN

● Essentially Animals, Killybegs, Back Lane, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 4U (01672 511959).



Kristin Kosowan, an animal aromatherapist, prepares to apply some essential oils to the skin of a sickly horse

A VET WRITES

Q Our back garden faces open countryside and last March our ten-year-old cat was attacked and killed — we believe by a fox. I contacted the RSPCA, which said that this was unlikely because foxes don't take domestic animals. We are planning to get another kitten this spring. Could he fall victim to a fox?

A I have nothing good to say about urban foxes. They are vermin, like wild rats, mink or mice. They take poultry, pet rabbits, guinea pigs, lambs and the chicks of ground-nesting birds, killing many more than they can possibly eat. But they are cowards. They won't tackle healthy cats because cats fight back. When cats and foxes meet, they usually ignore each other. But when a row develops, the fox usually backs off.

Your new kitten will meet plenty of dangers throughout his life, but foxes are at the bottom of the hazard list.

Q Our ten-year-old cat, Hubert, developed a sore on his upper lip. The vet called it a rodent ulcer and prescribed tablets for it. He said it could be removed by freezing it under anaesthetic. What caused it?

A Rodent ulcers are common. The scientific name is eosinophilic granuloma and they are categorised as "conditions of unknown origin". Suggested causes include infections by various viruses or bacteria; persistent irritation resulting from licking by the cat's rough tongue; a link with feline leukaemia; or some form of hypersensitivity.

The varying responses to treatment support the view that there are several different causes. Some ulcers clear up with hormone treatment. Others respond to corticosteroids. Surgical treatment — either cryo-surgery, which destroys the ulcer by freezing it, or simple excision — usually solves the problem, but it can recur. And some rodent ulcers disappear spontaneously, without treatment.

Q We bought Pippa, our Cocker Spaniel puppy, from a pet shop two months ago. We have just noticed she has a hernia. Will this affect her and should we have it operated on?

A I don't know. If it is an umbilical hernia — which is a hole left in the abdominal wall where the umbilical cord was attached — and no bigger than a medium-sized grape, there is little chance of trouble in the future. If it is larger, see your vet and take his advice.

I hope you are going to have Pippa spayed. If so, the hernia could be repaired at the same time, which would mean using one anaesthetic for two operations, with reduced costs and risks.

JAMES ALLCOCK

● Readers should write to The Times Vet, Weekend, The Times, 1, Pennington Street, London E1 1DN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.

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Tempany lacks confidence

ADOPT ME

TEMPANY is a two-year-old black mongrel who needs a home with older children, and perhaps another dog, to bring out her confidence.

Chow is an eight-year-old tan mongrel who would make an ideal companion for an elderly couple because she enjoys a quiet life.

Contact the Dogs' Home, Battersea, 4 Battersea Park Road, London SW8 4AA (0171-622 3626).



Chow enjoys a quiet life

Helping the body heal itself

ALTERNATIVELY SPEAKING

Virginia Host is insistent. She is neither an osteopath nor a physiotherapist, but she is a "GDS method" therapist.

Although her work is related to both fields — she is a member of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists — it is "verry, verrey different", she says in a delicious French accent. Now aged 32 and living in Britain, she was born and brought up in France.

The trouble is that very few people in Britain have ever heard of the GDS method. It was developed in the 1960s by a Belgian physiotherapist and osteopath named Godelieve Denys-Struyf, who has since taught the method at the European School of Osteopathy, in Maidstone, Kent.

In essence it synthesises osteopathy, physiotherapy, something called "holistic gymnastics" — "a form of body awareness that has similarities to yoga" — massage and practically any other body therapy you care to mention, all to create a completely new treatment.

The guiding principles are that the GDS therapists treat the whole person. "Holistic" is their middle name.

Whereas a physiotherapist might spot a bad back or a sprained knee and fix the problem, a GDS therapist would look to the underlying cause of the weakness. Otherwise, the patient would in time be back with the same sprained ankle, says Ms Host.

"Symptoms are often unrelated to causes," she says.

Her other role is par-educational. She seeks to explain to her patients why their bodies are rebelling by causing them pain, and how to try to restore a sense of harmony

between patient and body.

"I try to make the patient become more in touch with his or her body, understanding why problems occur, and learning how to help the body help itself," she says.

Every patient requires a different approach, culled from her wide experience of different body therapies, she says. One may shrink at her touch and therefore she will reject massage, she explains. Others are rationalists who thrive on explanations.

"Experience and Mrs Denys-Struyf's teaching means that I can almost read a person by their body language, their face, their body shape, the way they talk and walk. My treatment is then tailored to that person," she says.

Our session began with a general chat about my medical background, followed by one

of those horribly daunting full-body examinations when you are confronted with your reflection in a full-length glass.

No, I had not ever noticed that one of my shoulders sloped to the left, and that I naturally tilted my head to one side.

"Your body has become used to standing the wrong way," she said. "It will take a while to become used to a more correct posture."

Her diagnosis is based on Mrs Denys-Struyf's belief that there are six "muscular chains" or basic families of muscles in the body. Ideally, each chain should move gracefully and easily. But our bodies come to bear the brunt of emotional and other stress:

the chains build up tension points which, over time, become permanent.

Part of the reason is stress. Sometimes it may have been because of an accident or an injury," Ms Host says.

The result is an immovable hip or a faulty digestion. Gradually, such stresses and inflexibility in turn anger patients as they feel increasingly trapped in their bodies.

"The body is like a prison and people become unhappy living in it," Ms Host says, in the kind of mind-body language that the GDS method holds sacred.

She then worked on my tension points as I lay on the couch, investigating exactly where the trapped tension was and all the while recommending ways for me to stand and sit and how to become more aware of my body.

Sometimes she used gentle massage, sometimes she asked me to push against her. Sometimes she referred to Mrs Denys-Struyf's diagrams that decorate the walls of her treatment room in Regent's Park, north London.

She recommended that I had about six more treatments to feel the real benefit. For now, I felt the sensation of walking with my feet anchored more firmly on the ground and a loosening of the shoulders.

Anyone suffering from sports injuries, rheumatic pain, spine problems, breathing difficulties or general bodily stress should benefit from Ms Host's gentle ways.

● Virginia Host can be contacted via The Hale Clinic, 7 Park Crescent, London W1N 3HE (0171-631 0604).

What it is: A treatment that synthesises practically every body therapy you can think of.

Advantages: Non-invasive, pleasant to experience.

Disadvantages: Difficult to follow the theories about muscle chains.

Cost: £48 for an initial one-hour session, £40 for subsequent treatments.

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Old pals aid Clinton on letters 'hotline'

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

AN AVERAGE of 15,000 Americans write to President Clinton every day but only those bearing one of two magic numbers can be certain to reach the Oval Office.

These "Dear Bill" letters are part of a private epistolary brains trust that Mr Clinton has established with his oldest friends and earliest allies.

At a time when Washington is obsessed by questions of access to the President, particularly from Asian donors to the Democratic Party, this small cadre of loyalists provides perhaps the most telling insight into how this President tests the waters in his nation.

They are the chosen few who have been given a secret nine-digit post code and a personal fax number, the only group of American citizens who can honestly say they have a direct line to Mr Clinton and his policy.

Any letter bearing the secret "zip" code is quickly removed from the daily pile in the White House post

room and placed under the President's door. The faxes that spew into the small cubbyhole next to the Oval Office are swiftly rushed to his desk.

When Carolyn Staley, the preacher's daughter raised in the house next to Billy Clinton, wanted to rebuke the President last spring, she sent a fax. Mrs Staley, now deputy director of the National Institute for Literacy, said the Clinton budget would reduce spending on adult literacy to below the levels of the Bush Administration. Within hours she had a call from a budget analyst, and adult education programmes are now scheduled to receive a \$95 million injection in this year's presidential budget.

Earlier this month, when the Supreme Court was hearing arguments in the sexual harassment suit brought against Mr Clinton by Paula Jones, a former Arkansas state employee, Mrs Staley sent condolences to her old friend.

"At some level this is killing him,"

she said. "He wishes he could walk out, just casually up and down the street, and have people come up to him and talk about what they're thinking... We try to keep him on target. We're real people. We're real salt of the earth, blue collar, no silver spoon in the mouth."

Another who stays in contact is David Leopold, a chum from elementary school who is now a travelling computer software salesman. He will send as many as three faxes a week from his laptop on subjects from the North American Free Trade Agreement to what he has heard on radio talk-shows around the country.

Philip Jamison, in his class at Georgetown University and a Vietnam veteran, told the President that normalising relations with that country was a good thing. Maura Aspell, the only other non-Catholic at St John's parish school in Hot Springs, Arkansas, is another correspondent. Tommy Caplan, an author who sometimes works on speeches, is one, too.

"He contacts them afterwards by phone late at night and even his closest advisers don't know who he has talked to. He has to feel he is getting all the information before making a decision," said one White House aide yesterday.

"It's all part of the 21st-century outreach. If Al Gore becomes president he will probably have his own e-mail and personal website."

Poring over these missives, between 100 and 500 a week, is said to be an indispensable part of Mr Clinton's private time, the three to four hours that have been built into his daily schedule by Erskine Bowles, Chief of Staff.



Only a privileged few can be certain that their letters will reach President Clinton in the Oval Office

Canadian trappers cash in on fad for fur

FROM RICHARD CLEROUX IN OTTAWA

A SALE of furs opened in Toronto yesterday and is expected to provoke protests by animal rights activists around the world. More than 100,000 pelts are expected to be sold this weekend after a return to popularity for fur garments.

Alison Beal, of the Fur Institute of Canada, said the demand was being driven by fashion designers and the fashion press in New York.

The sudden resurgence of popularity of furs, which had been in steady decline for the past ten years, is attributed in large part to the prominence given furs in *Vogue* magazine and other fashion publications.

More than 80 per cent of the furs sold in Toronto this weekend will find their way to New York.

Only a year ago fur sales were so depressed that the annual June fur auction in Montreal was discontinued, ending a tradition that went back almost 200 years.

The new-found popularity is a bonanza for Canadian trappers, most of whom are aboriginal people living in remote areas of northern Canada for whom there is little else by way of work.

In poor years, a beaver skin will fetch \$80 (£49) for a trapper, double that for an ordinary fox pelt. But when furs are rare the market can fluctuate and even a modest beaver pelt can fetch \$200.

Republican joins Cabinet

Washington: Former Senator William Cohen of Maine was sworn in as Defence Secretary yesterday to become the first Republican to serve in a Clinton Cabinet. He succeeds William Perry.

President Clinton said the Senate's 99-0 vote to confirm Mr Cohen "sent a strong signal of its intention to work... in a bipartisan spirit to preserve and enhance our national security. Bill Cohen is the embodiment of that spirit." Mr Cohen said he looked forward to serving "to a new century with clarity of purpose". (AP)



Cohen: "a strong signal"

Pope attacks media for 'unwholesome' message

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

THE Pope yesterday accused the world's media of mocking religious believers by portraying them in a bad light and bombarding the young with "unwholesome images", rather than reinforcing moral values in the run-up to the millennium. He also said he sympathised with the "sufferings of divorced people", but said remarriage after divorce constituted "moral disorder".

In a message for World Communications Day, the Pope said the global explosion of information technology had given people "an ever-growing choice of sources... but the greater the choice, the harder it may be to choose responsibly". It was increasingly difficult to "protect one's eyes and ears from images and sounds which arrive through the media unexpectedly and uninvited". The media reached families "including very young children... What way

do the media point to? What truth do they propose? What life do they offer?"

Parents found it especially hard to guard their children from unwholesome messages, the Pope said, and it was "shocking how easily advanced communication technologies can be exploited by those whose intentions are evil". The Vatican has shown growing concern over sex and violence on television, and pornography on the Internet.

The Pope said many people in the Third World aspired to new technology, but were concerned about "domination of the media by so-called Western culture... Media products are seen as in some way representing values that the West holds dear... The truth may well be that the foremost value they really represent is commercial profit."

Programmes which dealt with religious or spiritual

aspirations or were morally uplifting and helped people to lead better lives were decreasing. "It is not easy to remain optimistic about the positive influence of the media when they appear either to ignore the vital role of religion in people's lives or to mock religious belief."

Speaking at the end of a Vatican conference on the family, the Pope said the Church could "not be indifferent to the painful problem" of divorce and remarriage. The task of the Church was to deal with family disintegration through "pastoral care consistent with Christ's teaching".

The Pope's guardian of doctrinal purity, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, yesterday also upheld the ban on the ordination of women. But he surprised observers by decreeing that those who advocated women priests were guilty of "an error" rather than "heresy".

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Cuba • 22



Dune roaming in the land of the gods



Olympia, site of the original Olympic games, is one of the most dramatic classical sites in Greece. The earthquake-tumbled ruins of the temple of Zeus are set among eucalyptus trees and flowering shrubs



FACT FILE

■ Sunvil Holidays. Sunvil House, Upper Square, Old Islington, Middlesex, N7 7BJ (0181-847 4748, brochure line) offers two-week packages at hotels in Pylos from £418 per person at the Villa Zoe and from £172 at the Karalis Beach Hotel, both including flights, road transfers and B&B.

■ Other tour operators include Inspirations (01293 822244) and Filomena (01422 375999).

■ All the above companies offer car hire as extra or as part of the deal. Sunvil from £170 per week. Hertz, Auto Europe, Eurodollar and other car-hire agencies have offices in Kalamata.

■ Olympic Airlines (0171-404 2400) flies from London to Kalamata via Athens from £220 including taxes. Regular bus services between Athens and Kalamata cost less than £10, but take four hours.

■ Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends *Pausanias - Guide to Greece Vol 2: Southern Greece* (Penguin, £9.99, ISBN 0 140 41126 X). *Modern Greece*, by C.M. Woodhouse (Faber, £9.99, ISBN 0 571 16122 7). *Greece, the Rough Guide Rough Guides*, £9.99, ISBN 1 855 28131 8.

George Hill begins our four-page Greece special in the Peloponnese



The first recorded games at Olympia were in 776 BC

In Greece they have a saying: "The British go to the islands, the Germans go to the mainland." As a generalisation, it holds the road well, but less well than it used to.

The British, drawn by Lord Byron's incantation about the isles of Greece, and by a vague sense of island-to-island affinity, fly down in swarms to lay waste to Corfu, Rhodes, and any other bit of Greece surrounded by water and serving English breakfasts.

The Germans, only a car ride away and more inclined to take their sightseeing seriously, used to make a land thrust through Yugoslavia to Athens, Delphi and Olympia, penetrating all the way through the Peloponnese to the three dagger-like promontories at its tip.

Since the former Yugoslavia became a war zone, this route has become difficult. As a result, many sleepy villages in the Peloponnese, where accommodation is more likely to be advertised as "Zimmer" than "Rooms", now find themselves sleepier than they would wish. So it is a good time to tear yourself away from the sun-baked rocks which pepper the Aegean and explore the mainland.

There, you can find a different Greece. Several, in fact. Those three promontories — Messinia, Mani and Malea — are like a trident jabbing into the Mediterranean. They look alike on the map, but they have quite different characters. The most dramatic contrasts are between Messinia and Mani, separated by a firth narrow enough to look across, yet utterly opposite landscapes.

"After the visitors leave every year, it rains for six months," a native told us in the village of Chirani, our base in Messinia. This tidy seasonal segregation of rain and sun is the due to the Messinian climate. However fiercely the water still runs in the rocky gullies, shaded by fig trees and elderberry. The land is a cornucopia of lemons, melons, nectarines and vines. Here is the source of the Kalamata olives, which are among Greece's juiciest and most ubiquitous exports.

The giant green calamus reeds grow ten or 12 feet tall. The stems look like bamboo, and the dense thickets seem so exotic that it would scarcely be a surprise to see a giant panda shouldering its way through the stems, or even a crocodile.

The sunshine is always tempered by a haze. Across the firth from our waterside balcony in Chirani, the Taygetus mountains, which make the backbone of the Mani, were only faintly visible — except at dawn, where they were outlined in silhouette by the sun rising behind, as it pierced the radiant haze like an X-ray.

All winter, the clouds blow in across Messinia from the west, and when they reach the hilltops, they let their blessings pour down. Afterwards, they blow across the parched Mani, exhausted, and leave it as parched as ever. The Mani is an arid landscape of bare rock and thorn bushes, with its own alarming beauty and the strangest village architecture in all Greece.

It is hard country, with a history of brigands, anchorites and blood feuds. Geographically it is the utmost tip of Sparta, and life there until recently was as Spartan as it is possible to be. Profoundly inaccessible and introverted for centuries, it is now easy to visit by a new fast road from Kalamata, which may be a blessing or a curse.

Messinia, by contrast, is soft country. In classical times, the hard Spartans generally kept it firmly under their thumb. This means that it is a region without many classical remains — the Messinians were not allowed to hang on to enough of the territory's natural wealth to build many monuments. Later warfare

laid their eggs in the sand. At the top of the beach, one can find rows of curious little enclosures marked with pebbles and chicken-wire, with signs on upright sticks, like tombstones in a pet's cemetery. When the turtles clamber ashore at night, observers with torches note where they lay their eggs, and mark the spots to warn people not to tread on the eggs.

I have not the slightest doubt which beach Nestor was sitting on when he spread out his sheepskin for Telemachos. The place is a little way from modern Pylos, at the other end of the bay of Navarino, where Admiral Coddington achieved Greek independence almost by accident one afternoon in 1827, by sinking 50 Turkish ships though he was not under orders to do anything of the kind. The same bay was the battleground in one of the all too rare engagements of the Peloponnesian War in which the Athenians gained an advantage over the Spartans, and did not throw it away.

In Nestor's time, Pylos was near the north end of the bay. The ruins of an archaic fortress still stand there giddily on top of a steep crag. This crag is hollow: the fortress is perched above the vault of a cobwebbed cathedral-like cavern, still known as Nestor's Cave. The cave overlooks a crescent cove of white sand fit for any king.

Hollowed out between two promontories scattered with prehistoric artefacts, and backed by dunes, it is so symmetrical that it seems to have been drawn with a pair of compasses. Its waters shelve gently from green to turquoise to peacock blue — calm, safe and clean. In autumn and spring, ospreys stop on their way to or from Africa, to gorge themselves on the fish in the lagoon behind.

This exquisite haven is almost deserted. Sunbathers may overlook it, because its name in Greek, Voithio Kilia ("Ox Belly" Cove) is unalluring. More practically, it cannot be reached except on foot, or along bone-shaking rough tracks through marshes and calamus thickets.

I hope those tracks remain forever unimproved, and that Ox Belly Cove will always be known only to the handful who hike across the dunes, and reach that immaculate curve of blue and white, where they can sit down on the sand beside Nestor's ghost.

Every year, in a highly vulnerable migration which was already ancient when Nestor was a schoolboy, turtles come out of the sea here to

lay their eggs in the sand. At the top of the beach, one can find rows of curious little enclosures marked with pebbles and chicken-wire, with signs on upright sticks, like tombstones in a pet's cemetery. When the turtles clamber ashore at night, observers with torches note where they lay their eggs, and mark the spots to warn people not to tread on the eggs.

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Greece: On the tiny island of Paxos, days are spent on little else than walking, boating and eating ...

We're busy doing nothing - cheers

Paxos: the very word suggests peace. It was a pity, then, that the message had not got through to the instructors at the sailing school below our villa. They were getting ready for the summer season, painting boats and hammering nails from morning to night. All of this work was accompanied by loud pop music, which shattered the calm of an otherwise tranquil bay. It began at an ungodly hour (all right, about nine o'clock), just as we were pondering the day's most difficult decision: whether to have croissants or crusty bread fresh from the bakery oven. The last thing I needed before breakfast was Gary Glitter inviting me to be in his gang.

If your idea of a holiday is an endless trapeze from museums to art galleries to churches, you would not enjoy Paxos. But for two tired parents with a nine-month-old child in tow, it was bliss. There is little to do, so you do little slowly. Life settles into a pattern - a long, lazy breakfast on the terrace, a stroll to



Forget the car, going shopping is donkey work on Paxos

the shops, lunch and a siesta, then perhaps a walk to a deserted beach. When you return, it is almost time for the first of the evening's drinks as the sun sets over the bay, enticing you to stroll out once more for fresh fish at a waterside taverna.

Our villa in Lakka encouraged such an existence. The balcony, bathed in afternoon sun, had views across the entire bay, from the harbour

to the open sea. With a book in one hand and a glass of wine in the other, there was little temptation to move on. Two hours from Corfu by boat, Paxos is like its larger neighbour but without the crowds. Day-trippers may invade Gaïos, the capital, for a few hours each afternoon, but the lack of an airport keeps most tourists away. Move up the coast to Loggos or Lakka and you keep running into the

same few people, most on their eighth or ninth visit. It is that sort of place.

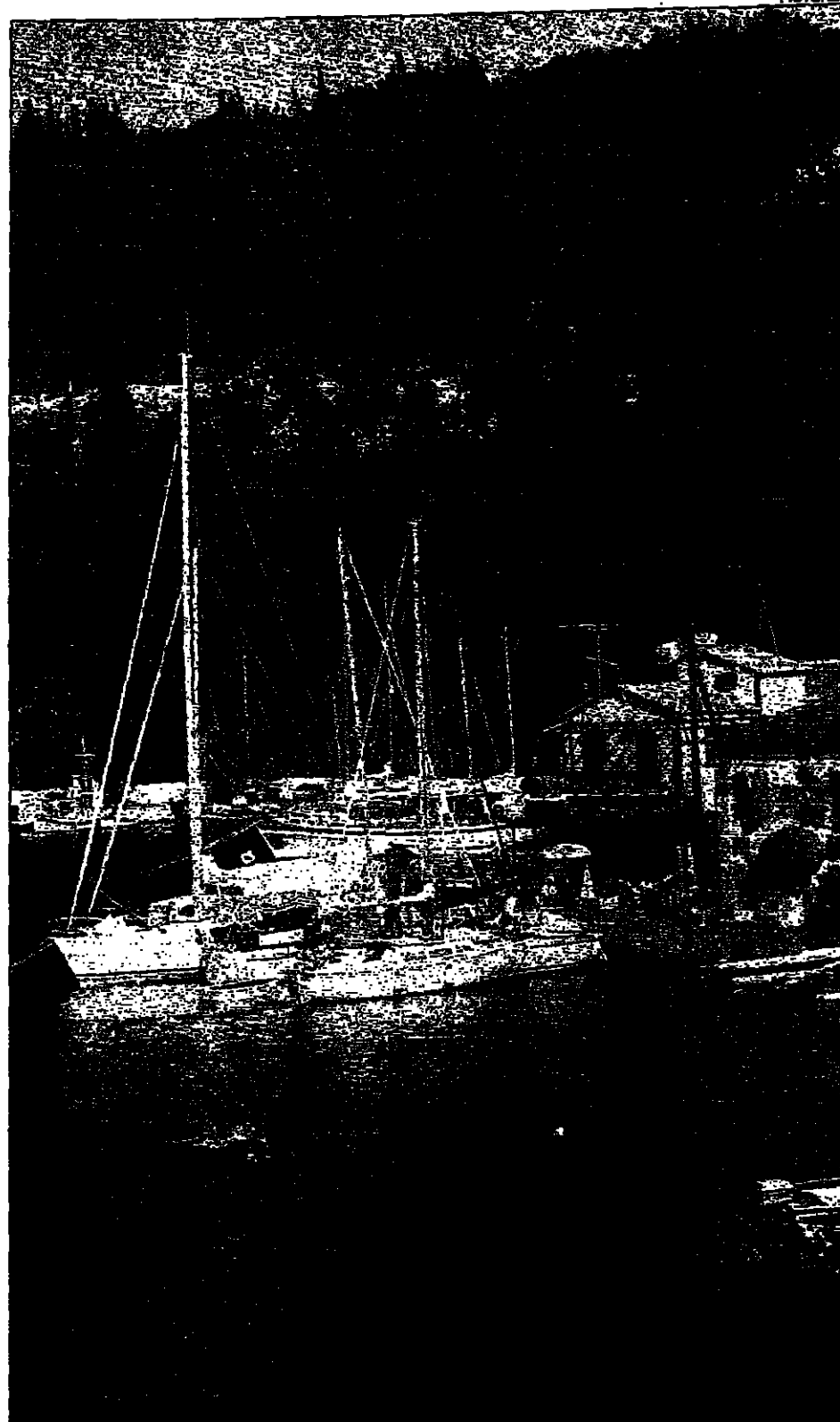
Seven miles long by two miles wide, the island has one bus, five taxis and a petrol station, which often runs out of petrol. But who needs a car on an island that small? Instead, you walk in the shade of olive trees, a legacy of 400 years of Venetian occupation. In two weeks you can cover every footpath on the island, so why hurry? Even in May we found an hour or two in the morning and the same before supper was enough.

By walking, you get to see the wild flowers, oleander and rock roses and bright Spanish broom, which burst magically out of the cliffs and olive groves each spring. And, by walking, you discover the hidden coves along the east coast, small pebble beaches in the shadow of forested slopes, which can be reached only on foot or by hired boat. It does not take much effort. In May at least, to find a private beach for the afternoon.

A favourite walk from Lakka led to a Byzantine church, the oldest on the island, where the caretaker showed us in and refused to take any money. The path continued to an abandoned village, with decaying Venetian villas and the ruins of an olive press, before skirting the crest of a dramatic bay as waves crashed against the limestone cliffs below.

This is the wild west coast, where you swim or take a boat at your peril. However, one morning we hired a boatman to take us around the island in an old fishing craft, open to the sun and wind. When he was not drawing on his cigarette he was sipping from a can of beer.

Our trip took us past strange rock formations and into caves before the boatman dropped us off for while on Antipaxos, a tiny satellite island with vineyards instead of olive groves and some of the finest sandy beaches anywhere in Greece.



Though fashionable with the yachting crowd, Lakka has a village life beyond tourism

After a week in Lakka, we moved two miles up the coast to Loggos. Our villa here, high above the harbour, had views stretching 12 miles across the Ionian Sea to the Greek mainland. The terrace was shaded by olive, lemon and rose trees and trellised vines, forcing the sunlight to play peek-a-boo with the whitewashed walls. Where Lakka is yachting fashionable, Loggos attracts the

villa crowd; where Lakka has a life beyond tourism and a main square where locals gather at night, Loggos is little more than a collection of bars and tavernas around an outrageously pretty harbour.

The tavernas are so close to the water that when the bus goes past - at least, that's what the brochures claim, we were not to have the chance to

find out. On the day we arrived, workmen started digging up the road, and we decided that even Gary Glitter was preferable to the noise of a JCB. People in the harbourside villas wondered what had happened to their "quiet fishing village"; the locals shrugged their shoulders and smiled. And the bus? It simply made a detour of several miles.



FACT FILE

- **Paxos Holidays**. Whatley Farm, Whatley, Frome, Somerset BA11 3LA (01573 854000), offers a two-week self-catering holiday on Paxos - one week at Villa Oly in Lakka and the other week at Villa Mandelina in Loggos - from £350 per person for two people including flights, boat transfers and maid service.
- **Other tour operators** to Paxos include Simply Ionian, 0181-995 1121; CV Travel, 0171-581 0851; Sailing Holidays, 0181-459 8787.
- **Outboard motorboats** can be hired in Lakka or Loggos, or booked in advance through Paxos Holidays, from £85 a week plus petrol.
- **Reading: Landscapes of Paxos**, by Noel Percord (Sunbower, £6.99, ISBN 1 856 91083 0). Exploring Paxos and Antipaxos, by Susan Omar, available for £7 through Paxos Holidays (address above), which also sells walking maps of the island for £5 and guidebooks for £6.

"Aren't you brave bringing a baby to Greece," people kept saying. Not at all: he had never been happier. With few foreign babies there, Adam soon became a celebrity. Shopkeepers gave him lollies and chocolate sticks, against the wishes of his health-conscious parents; waitresses refused to let him leave without a kiss - a privilege not extended to his father. If anyone loves children more than the Greeks, I have yet to meet them.

"First time on Paxos? You'll be back," said a couple we met on our last day there. And, yes, we probably will.

TONY KELLY

● The author was a guest of Paxos Holidays.

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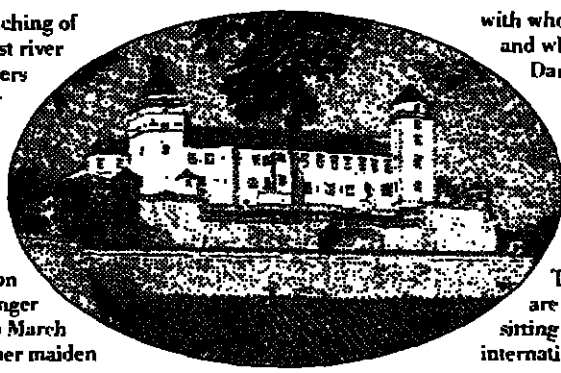
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THE ITINERARY

DAY 1 London (Heathrow) - Cologne with British Airways. Brief city excursion including the impressive Cathedral, followed by lunch and afternoon embarkation on the MS Amadeus. Sail along the Rhine and turn into the Moselle River.

DAY 2 Cochem Arrive before breakfast in this unworldly picturesque river town, surrounded by rising terraces of vineyards. The town is dominated by a hilltop castle, the Reichsburg, built in 1029.

DAY 3 Rudesheim Sailing back to the Rhine, we will visit the ancient town of Rudesheim, situated in the heart of the Rheingau, the centre of Germany's wine growing area.

DAY 4 Frankfurt - Aschaffenburg Spend the morning in Frankfurt, the site of the first German parliament, the birthplace of Goethe and one of the joint capitals of Charlemagne's empire. Leaving the Rhine we will enter the River Main and sail to Aschaffenburg for an overnight mooring.

DAY 5 Aschaffenburg - Miltenberg Marktheidenfeld. Sail at dawn to Miltenberg, a picturesque Bavarian village. Join a guided walking tour past delightful medieval and Renaissance houses, the imposing Gothic Merchant's Hall and the Market Square. Afternoon sailing to Marktheidenfeld, a tiny Franconian hamlet for an overnight mooring.



DAY 6 Marktheidenfeld - Würzburg Morning on the river, reaching the great city of Würzburg at lunch time. Here in the heart of the Franconian wine region we will explore the medieval, Baroque and Rococo architectural treasures.

DAY 7 Würzburg - Kitzingen - Volkach - Hassfurt After breakfast there will be an opportunity to join a morning excursion to Kitzingen along the 'Romantic Road' to Rothenburg, thought by many to be Europe's most perfect medieval town. In the afternoon sail through the enchanting scenery to Hassfurt for an overnight mooring.

DAY 8 Hassfurt - Bamberg - Nuremberg Arrive in Bamberg after breakfast. See the magnificent cathedral and explore this medieval gem with its Renaissance palace and Baroque houses. Sail during the afternoon to the great city of Nuremberg for an overnight mooring.

DAY 9 Nuremberg - Hiltpoltstein - Regensburg Today, either cruise to Regensburg or take a city tour of Nuremberg which will include the 13th century city wall complete with towers, watchtowers and gates, some of the fabulous

Gothic churches and the medieval market. Moor overnight in Regensburg and enjoy a walk around one of the best preserved medieval towns in Europe.

DAY 10 Regensburg - Passau Stay in Regensburg until the mid-afternoon. Sail through the night to Passau.

DAY 11 Passau - London (Heathrow) Drive to Munich for British Airways return flight.

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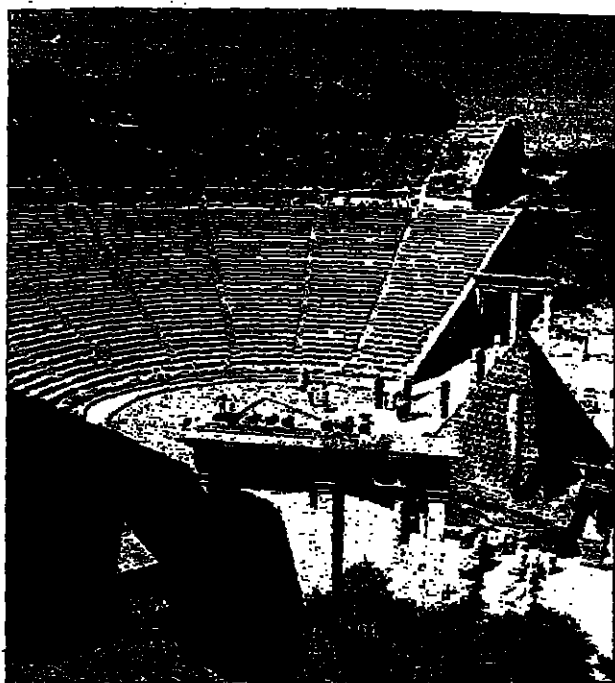
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The magnificent ancient theatre at Epidaurus

Where to satisfy a Grecian yearn

For any traveller, the first visit to Greece is a memorable event: a place full of outstanding attractions that have to be seen. It has been pulling in the crowds for centuries, but I had not been there before.

When I decided to make the trip last September, the question was: where to go in Greece? The consensus among my Hellenophile friends dictated a trip to the islands, but even here there was no unanimity, except that Corfu did not count. It had to be Sifnos, Paxos, Mykonos, Rhodes or Skiathos, but it must not have an airport, because then it would certainly be spoilt.

In the end, I took off for a week in Porto Heli, and no amount of advice could have provided a better choice. Porto Heli is on the south-eastern tip of the Peloponnese, about 100 miles from Athens by road or two and a half hours by sea from Piraeus on the Flying Dolphin, one of those fast hydrofoil ferries that zip about the Aegean like giant water beetles.

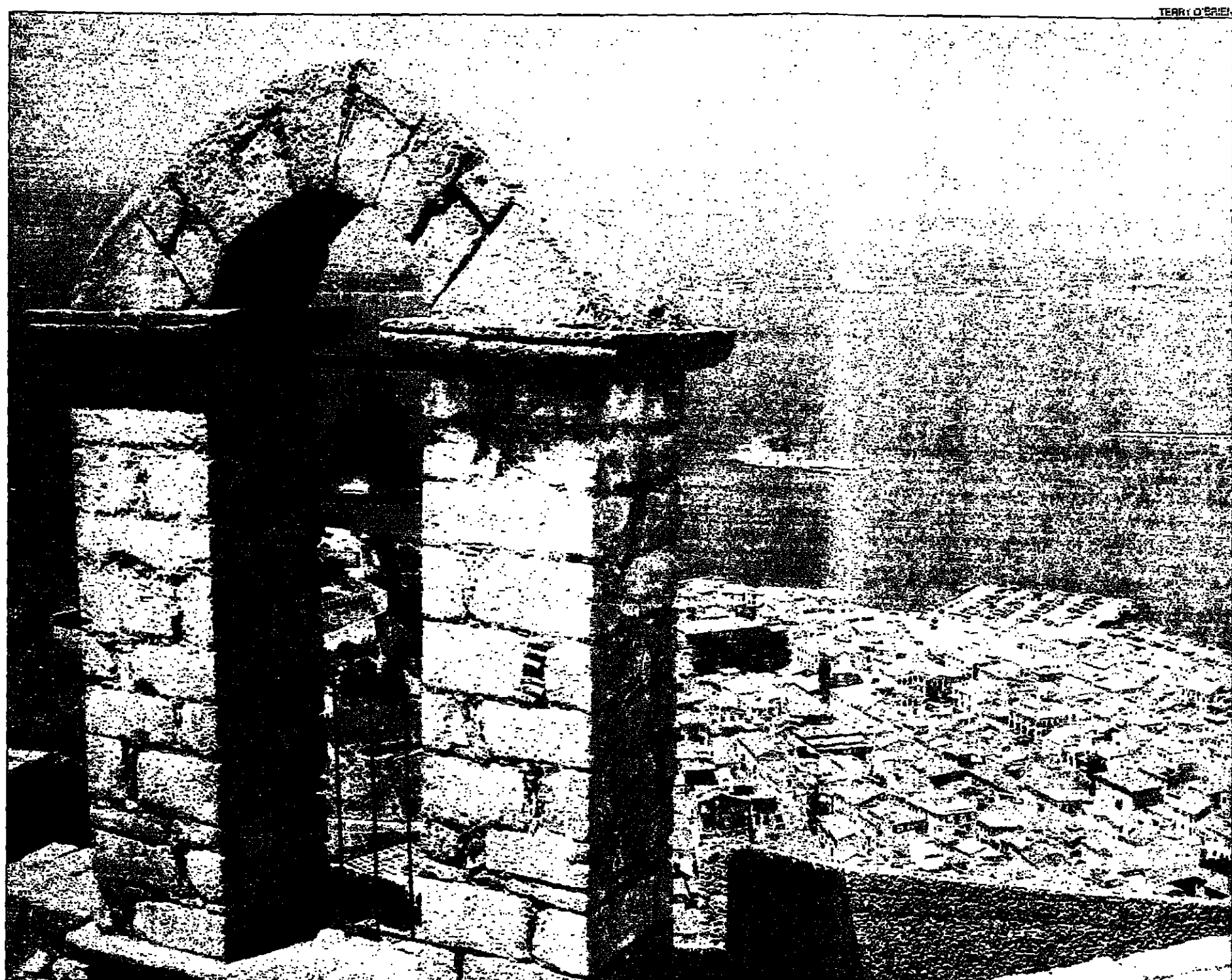
The town is a yachting centre, rather upmarket and well provided with good restaurants. There are ancient sites close by and, if you must have islands, then Hydra, Spetses and Poros are no great distance away. Porto Heli, in short, has a microcosm of all

that Greece has to offer and, having bought a map and hired a car, I set out to see the sights.

The Peloponnese is over-provided with things to see and do, so it pays to be selective. Besides, the countryside is mountainous, the roads are narrow and Greek drivers are kamikaze-minded, so there is a limit to how far you can sensibly go in a day.

I have no great interest in pre-Christian sites and covered that part of the Greek experience with a visit to the amphitheatre at Epidaurus, before pressing on to the coastal town of Nauplio, a Greek gem and a most romantic little place. Indeed, a man I met outside Nauplio told me that if my wife and I went walking through the old streets of the town we would fall in love all over again.

Nauplio offers a combination of narrow, flower-filled streets, a vast central square lined with shops and restaurants, a great Venetian castle on the headland and the Bourtzi, an exquisite, smaller, late medieval fortress out in the bay. In the last century, the Bourtzi was the home of the town's executioner and in this century it served for a while as a luxury hotel, famous in Greece—or at least in Nauplio—as the place where Melina Mercouri, the actress and later



Dramatic view of the bay from the town of Nauplio, a romantic gem where married couples walking through the narrow old streets are reputed to fall in love all over again

the Minister of Culture, consummated her first marriage. Epidaurus and Nauplio, with a brief stop at the exquisite Byzantine church at Ligourio, provided a good day out, but by sunset I was back in Porto Heli and eager to sample the nightlife.

There was plenty of that to enjoy, none of it too noisy. The resort straggles around the bay, past the dock for the yachts and the Flying Dolphin, and the western end of the promenade, known locally as The Corner, is where the international smart set congregates at sunset for a quick ouzo at Coco's cocktail bar, or a glass or two of retsina at Maxine's Portobello, before moving on to dinner at one of the town's restaurants.

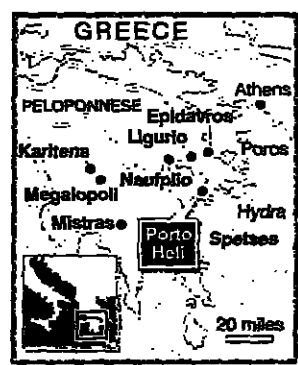
The food was a revelation, because even my friends back home had not concealed the fact that the phrase "Greek cuisine" is usually an oxymoron. However, dinner at Yannis Kontoyannis's Rota restaurant in The Corner was simply delicious.

The Rota was exceptional, but there is plenty of competition, from the Taverna Costas or the Taverna Papadakis. The dinner, the walk around the shore in the moonlight and a nightcap on the balcony looking over the bay were all delightful. After just two days in the country I was beginning to see why Greece was special.

It seemed sensible to fit in an island and, because Spetses is just ten minutes away by motorboat, this is the one I chose. Spetses has plenty of beaches and a pretty little port where John Fowles stayed while he wrote *The Magus*, but there were rather too many tourists so half a day was enough.

For the rest of the week I alternated days in Porto Heli, snorkelling in the bay or doing very little two pastimes for which Porto Heli is ideal, with long forays into the hinterland to see some of the splendid medieval or Byzantine sites of the Peloponnese, such as Mistras and Karitena.

Mistras, or Mystra, is part-Frankish, part-Byzantine, a ruined, medieval town, topped by a large castle built by the princely Villehardouins, a Frankish family who ruled



hereabouts in the 13th century. The whole site is striking, best seen in the morning when the sun is full on it, a jumble of stone-built houses spread across the steep slope of the mountain, with narrow, cobbled streets lined with orange and olive groves, where small ornate Byzantine churches, their walls painted with frescoes and hung with icons, stand at every corner.

Nearby Sparta, once the centre of the city state of Sparta, is a riot of concrete and need not delay any traveller eager to push north, past Megalopolis to the site of Karitena. This is a pretty village, full of friendly people, and the main attraction is a ruined, medieval castle. This one once belonged to the knight Geoffrey de Bruyere, a paragon of chivalry and hero

of *The Chronicles of the Morea*, a book about the short-lived Frankish kingdom which existed here in the 13th century. The castle is in ruins but the views from the crumbling battlements are superb, stretching for miles over an empty golden landscape, where the black columns of the cypress trees stand out like exclamation marks against the silver-green of the olive groves.

I sat on the battlements, looking out at the land, and wondered why it had taken me 60 years to come here.

A week is not enough to see even a small percentage of what the Peloponnese has to offer, but at least a start had been made. There was still Olympia to see, the hills of Arcadia and resorts such as Kalamata, so I shall have to come back.

ROBIN NEILLANDS
The author was a guest of Voyages Hellen.

PORTO HELI FACT FILE

- Voyages Hellen, 1 Old Garden House, The Lanterns, Bridge Lane, London SW11 3AD 0171 424 4401, offers a week at Porto Heli in the Peloponnese in a self-catering apartment by the shore from £371 per person, including flights, insurance and accommodation.
- The charge for car hire for one week is from £199, but you can arrange the car hire locally for about £30 a day.
- Ferry fares to Spetses cost from 250 drachmas.
- Reading: *Greek Myths*, by Robert Graves (Penguin, Vol 1 £6.99, ISBN 0 140 01026 2; Vol 2 £5.99, ISBN 0 140 01027 0), *Mani*, by Patrick Leigh Fermor (Penguin, £7.99, ISBN 0 140 11511 0), *Blue Guide Greece* (A & C Black, £16.99, ISBN 0 713 63250 X).

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	Wed 19 Mar	Port Said, Egypt	Cairo & Pyramids
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9707	Fri 21 Mar	Kusadasi, Turkey	Ephesus
	Sat 22 Mar	At sea	
	Sun 23 Mar	Port Said, Egypt	Cairo & Pyramids
	Mon 24 Mar	Ashdod, Israel	Jerusalem & Bethlehem
	Tue 25 Mar	Haifa, Israel	Lower Galilee
	Wed 26 Mar	Larnaca, Cyprus	Curium & Kolossi
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WORD WATCHING

Answers from page 27

CAPITOL

(b) A name given to the municipal magistrates of Toulouse. From the late Latin *capitulum*, for *capitulum*, a chapter or town-hall.

CORDYL

(a) An old book-name of the water-newt or some allied animal. Now applied to a genus of lizards (*Cordylus*). An adaptation of the Greek *kordilos* a water-newt. Toppell, *Serpents*, 1607: "Of the Cordyl I find some difference about the nature of this living creature, whether it be a Serpent or a Fish."

CAROTEL

(a) The commercial name for a tierce or cask, in which dried fruit and some other commodities are packed, which usually averages about 7cwt.

CONICOPOLY

(b) A native clerk or writer in the Madras Presidency of the British Raj. A corruption of the Tamil *Cannaka-pillai* an account man. *Pillai* = a child or person.

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Greece: Staying in a cave with all mod cons and splendid views is the best way to avoid the crowds on Santorini

On top of the volcano

We slept by night in a cave set into an almost perpendicular 900ft cliff and swam by day in the caldera — the crater left by the world's biggest volcanic eruption 3,500 years ago.

Across the cliff were the hulks of the caves that were destroyed when the volcano last erupted 40 years ago. Yet hope — or is it greed anxious to cash in on tourism — usually wins over experience. Forty years on, hundreds of "caves", villas and houses once again tumble perilously down the cliffs of Oia (pronounced Eea) in Santorini, the island at the southernmost end of the Cyclades that was claimed by Plato as Atlantis.

Our cave burrowed deep into the cliff but there was no sense of claustrophobia and it came with all mod cons and a terrace overlooking the caldera and the volcanic island of Thirasia left behind after the earthquake. Wherever we looked, the colour was blue — all the doors, the Aegean that flowed serenely over the caldera so far below and especially the sky. Sometimes it was difficult to detect where the sky ended and the sea began.

The ferries from Athens, a few cruise liners and the occasional yacht or gin palace steamed gently through the channel on their way to Thira, the island's capital.

At night, the sunsets are so spectacular that the cliff-top is thronged with tourists. They arrive from all over the island to watch as the sun — appearing as the crimson globe of so many travel brochures — sinks below the horizon and sets the sky in flames.

The tidal wave created by the eruption on Santorini was so powerful that it swamped the Minoan civilisation of Crete 80 miles away and left Santorini, and the civilisation that had flourished there since before the Bronze Age, buried

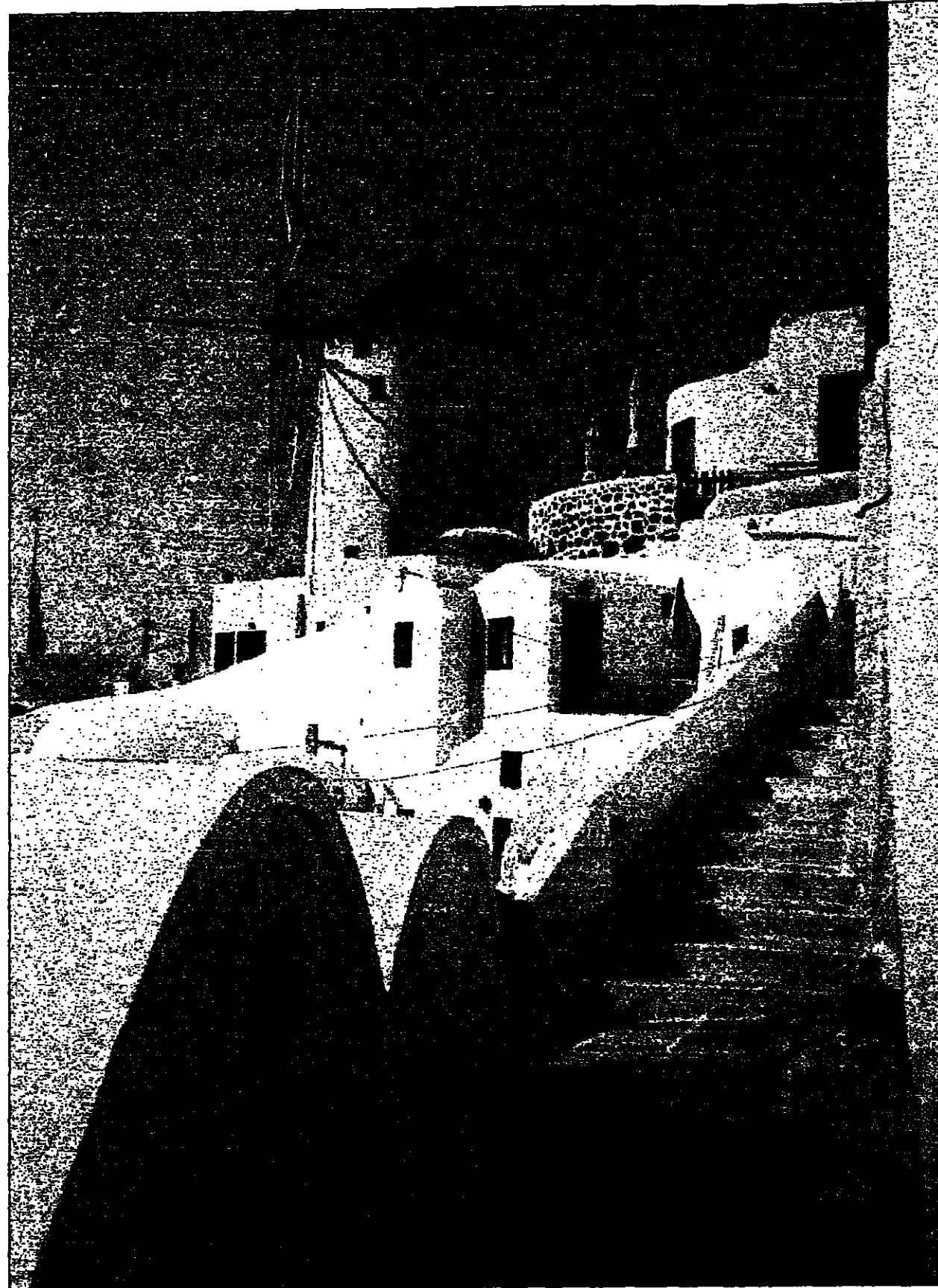
under mountains of volcanic ash, as well as three tiny islands and beaches that still have black sand.

Only this century have archaeologists uncovered their buried civilisation and the two great tourist attractions of Santorini today are from the Bronze Age — the ancient city of Thira, built on a cliff-top at nearly 1,000ft to guard against pirates, and Akrotiri, both easily visited from Oia within an hour by car or the ubiquitous scooters.

Men and women were living at Akrotiri and ancient Thira, cultivating their vines and citrus trees, 3,500 years before the birth of Christ and it is an eerie and uplifting experience to visit what remains of their civilisation, a Minoan Pompeii. They knew they were living on a volcano and built their houses with stone, putting wooden joints between the walls to guard against earthquakes. They lived in three-storey houses with working lavatories and exquisite murals on the walls. They fished and hunted animals. They worked with gold, silver, copper, tin and bronze. They sculpted vases and decorated them beautifully.

There are equally eerie experiences in visits by boat from modern Thira, with 587 steps down to the port or a dizzying funicular down the cliff, to the Kameni islands in the caldera which seem like coal heaps, on to the scarcely inhabited Thirasia, and then to watch the sunset from the sea.

Most residents of Santorini still live along the top of the cliffs, with their houses tumbling across the top and down the sides like honeycombs. Seen from the caldera, the red and black cliffs rise spectacularly with a scattering of white houses like icing along the top. Seen from the top of the cliffs, they tumble higgledy-piggledy



Most residents of Oia in Santorini live along the cliffs, with their houses tumbling down the sides like honeycombs

down the cliffside, painted white with blue doors, many still in caves, most with balconies, interspersed with tiny alleyways and magnificent views over the sea. Although it has only a few

big beaches, mainly at Perissa and Kamari to the south on the eastern plain, Santorini lives today by tourism; once the season ends in October there is an exodus back to Athens and the mainland. The

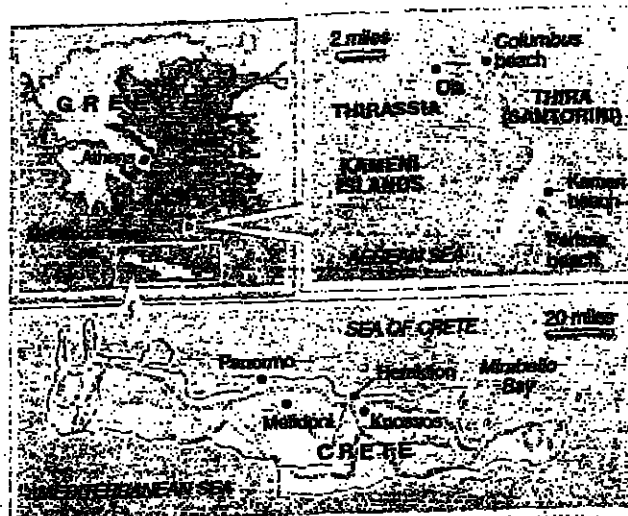
island is so small that it could easily be spoilt and some areas already are. Kamari is a mini Costa del Sol, thronged with lines of sunbeds and the plain packed with hotels, but adventurous travellers can easily find deserted beaches. We took the bus from Oia to the beach at Columbus, where there were few sunbathers, two decent cafes and swimmers can still occasionally hear the volcano rumbling below them.

We walked down the steep cliff at night to the cafes at the small port where fish were hauled out of the sea, scaled by your table, freshly grilled and served. A good meal with two bottles of wine for two cost less than £20. By day, we could swim from rocks a short walk from the port round the bottom of cliffs. Yet, unless you enjoy lazing in the sun with a pile of novels,

seem to have put a stop to new building on the rest of the eastern plain. Oia is at the northernmost tip of the island. It is smaller, less crowded, more elegant and less vulgar than Thira, an enchanting village with a narrow central street, about 6ft wide, with shops, cafes and restaurants on either side, a church and a main square with a baker and a bus station.

Stepping warily down into the depths of Meloni cave was an eerie reminder of the old conflict between Greek and Turk. It was a relief when we emerged to an al fresco supper of salad and kebabs at the cafe above the cave and gazed down at the lights twinkling from the villages in the now peaceful plain below.

BRIAN MACARTHUR
The author was a guest of the Greek Islands Club.



Santorini is a confection, an island to visit for only a few days. So we decided to try another Greek island, from one of the smallest to the biggest, and took the short hop to Crete to see if we could find a part that was still unspoilt. We did, very successfully, at Panormo, 55 kilometres west along the coast from Heraklion, once a busy harbour town for exports to Europe that was left behind when the motorways took over from steam railways.

Panormo today is what Greece used to be like — a small, unhurried and welcoming village where the men still sat in huddles all morning over their coffee. There were only a few shops and a few restaurants above a small deserted beach. We stayed at the Villa Kynthia, only 200 yards from the sea in the centre of the village, an old family house that has been lovingly restored and which now offers five bedrooms, a shaded courtyard and a small swimming pool and is almost next door to the best tavern in town.

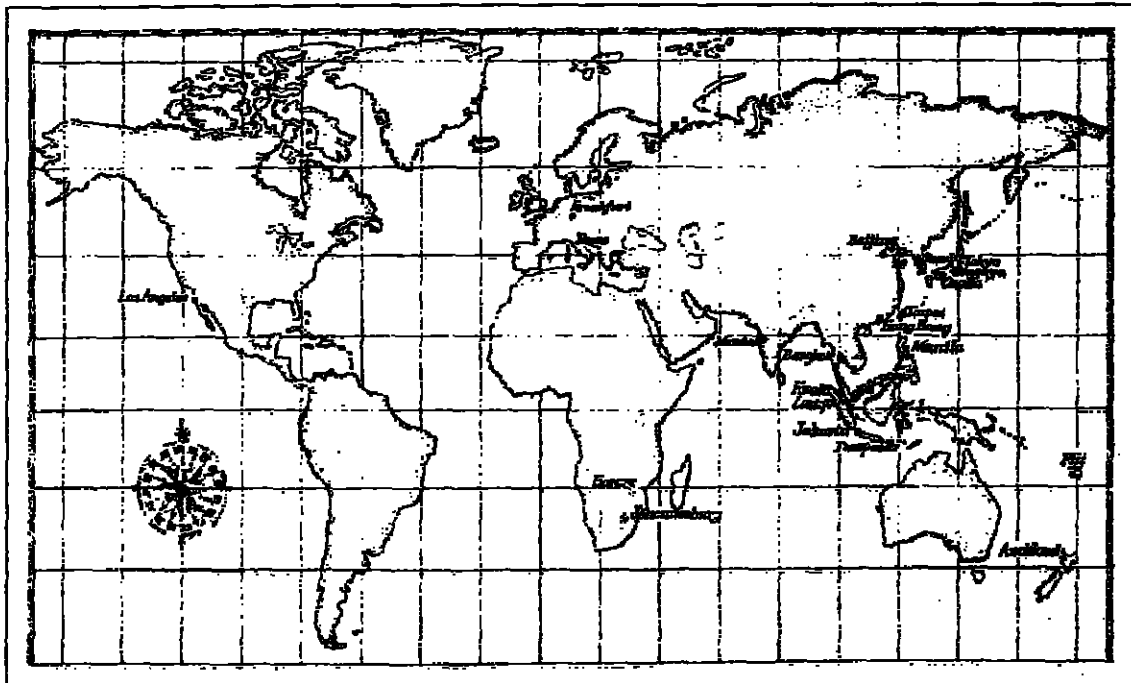
All the sights of Crete, including Knossos, can be reached easily from here but we had seen them before and decided on an exploration of the mountains behind Panormo. There are parts of Crete that are packed with tourists but if you want solitude, space, grandeur, breathtaking views and the friendliness of tiny villages such as Kastri, the mountains are the places to go.

Highlight of the holiday was the cave in the hills above Melidoni. It has recently been opened to tourists, though few find it. It was in this vast, underground cave, which still has fragments of pottery from the Minoan era and which has the awesome spaciousness of a cathedral, that 370 villagers took refuge from a Turkish attack in 1823 and refused to surrender. All were suffocated when the leader of the Turkish army set fire to the cave's entrance and their remains are in a large grave in the main hall.

Stepping warily down into the depths of Meloni cave was an eerie reminder of the old conflict between Greek and Turk. It was a relief when we emerged to an al fresco supper of salad and kebabs at the cafe above the cave and gazed down at the lights twinkling from the villages in the now peaceful plain below.

- FACT FILE**
- The author stayed at the Esperas complex at Oia, which the Greek Islands Club Private Collection, 66 High Street, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey (01932 220477) offers from £650 per person per week, including flights, transfers and accommodation. The club offers several other properties on the island, all with views over the caldera, as well as properties in Crete.
 - The best restaurant on Santorini is the Tomato on the east coast behind the airport. It sets London standards but charges at London standards, too.
 - Afternoon and evening cruises to the islands cost from about £15. The Thira funicular costs £2. Entrance to Akrotiri about £3.50.
 - Flat shoes are essential in Santorini.
 - Reading: *Crete: The Battle and the Resistance*, by Antony Beevor (Penguin, £7.99, ISBN 0 140 16787 0). *The Making of the Cretan Landscape*, by Oliver Rackham (Mandarin University Press, £19.99, ISBN 0 719 03647 X). *Crete* (Rough Guides, £8.99, ISBN 1 858 28132 6).

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ICELANDAIR

Caribbean: Life on St Barts and St Martin maintains a chic and understated Gallic flavour, even in a hurricane

Blow me down, it could be France

As you grow older and a little more world-weary you reach a moment in your life when all you want to do when you go on holiday is just sit on the beach and maybe swim a little. This moment turns out to be when you're three years old. If you happen to be a beach-mad three-year-old with a precocious taste for a little French food and sophistication, you might well consider lolling on a beach on the Côte d'Azur. But if you are a Francophile three-year-old beach-boy who has a dread of those Côte d'Azur crowds, the French Caribbean may prove to be your paradise, especially because, at three, you're too young to pick up the bar bills.

But where? St Barthélemy is as good an introduction as any. St Barts, as it is known, is chic and mostly understated; think of it as the Caribbean version of the little black dress. It is a Dorian Gray version of France, which stays youthful while the real thing ages. Unlike most other Caribbean islands there is almost nothing to indicate that St Barts, with its authentic tabacs and boulangeries, isn't somewhere on the French Mediterranean coast. Even the supermarket is a replica of a French original, right down to the imported Brittany tomatoes.

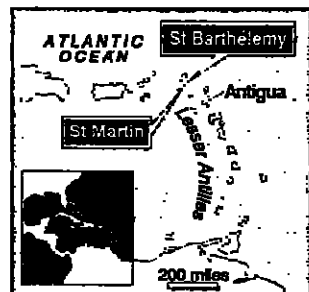
The capital of this tiny island, Gustavia (St Barts was owned by the Swedes for 100 years) has every couturier boutique that the swankiest French dresser could pine for: Lacroix, Gucci, Versace, Ralph Lauren, Cartier, Bulgari. There is good food on every corner. In L'iguane, Gustavia even boasts the only sushi restaurant in the West Indies. The only way St Barts could be any more French would be if Sacha Distel personally serenaded you as you strolled through airport arrivals.

Although small — it takes only an afternoon to drive around the island — St Barts offers refuge to France's rich and famous, from the Rothschilds to Eric Cantona — as well as to *Hello!* faces such as Diana, Princess of Wales, and her photographer chum Patrick Demarchelier, who has a £3 million villa here (property on St Barts is pricier than in the posh quarters of Paris).

ST BARTS AND ST MARTIN FACT FILE

■ Simply Caribbean, 3 Victoria Avenue, Harrogate HG1 1EQ (01423 526887), offers a seven-night stay at Guanahani on St Barts from £1,222 per person, based on double room and breakfast and including return flights and transfers. Prices for seven nights at La Samanna on St Martin start from £1,269 per person.

■ St Barts and St Martin can be reached year-round via flights to Antigua, British Airways (0345 222111) flies to Antigua from



Gatwick, and BWIA (0181-577 1100) from Heathrow. You can also fly to St Martin on Air France (0181-742 6603) from Paris, and on KLM (0181-750 9000) through Amsterdam.

■ No visa is required for EU nationals. Dollars and French francs are accepted.

■ Reading — St Martin: *The Traveller's Tree*, by Patrick Leigh Fermor (Penguin, £7.99, ISBN 0 140 1513 7), *The Weather Prophet*, by Lucinda Stewart (Vintage, £6.99, ISBN 0 099 59761 6), *Caribbean Islands Handbook 1997*, by Sarah Cameron (Footprint Handbooks, £14.99, ISBN 0 900 75175 4), *St Barts: The Violins of Saint-Jacques*, by Patrick Leigh Fermor (Penguin, £5.99, ISBN 0 140 01661 9), *Penguin Book of Caribbean Short Stories*, ed E.A. Markham (£8.99, ISBN 0 140 24503 0), *The Northeastern Caribbean*, by James Henderson (Corgi, £9.99, ISBN 0 947 75482 2).

We arrived in St Barts from Antigua on one of those four-seater planes you thought were used only by Flying Doctors in the Australian outback. It said *Carib* on the side.

presumably because the fuselage was too small to fit in all the letters of Caribbean Aviation. The airstrip looks about as long as a boules court, and ends in the sea. Make sure your pilot has good brakes.

Traditionally, the wealthy are in town when Europe is on the gloomy side in winter and early spring, which means that summer in the Caribbean is not only off-season and, therefore, cheaper, it is also far less crowded and not so socially competitive: women can wear the same Prada frock as last year and fewer people will be around to pity them.

Children get a chance to play on a beach, rather than being assigned a pricey daily square of sand on those private sandpits that dominate the Côte d'Azur. They can also swim in the sea without the need for an armful of vaccinations.

The weather is pretty well constant all the year round. The

summer is not ruined by high humidity. There is slightly more rain, but showers are brief. If you are unlucky, you might find yourself in the path of a hurricane: there have been two in the past two years, so the chance of another one is remote. But nature hasn't always read the latest on probability theory and in this part of the world they don't offer any guarantees.

As it turned out, we happened to be in St Barts when Hurricane Bertha sped past last July, causing not much damage, though a certain amount of panic in advance. But once you are sure that it isn't going to be a Big One, you might as well enjoy the experience for the 24 hours or so that your paths cross.

When the eye of the hurricane is passing directly above you — again a pretty long shot given the smallness of most of the Caribbean islands and the vastness of the surrounding ocean — the hurricane feels a bit like high-speed train travel, only in reverse: instead of you slicing through the atmosphere at 150mph, the atmosphere slices past you at 150mph. It's nature's

idea of a spring-clean. The palm trees bend at the waist, like in *Apocalypse Now*, as if they are bowing like humble subjects to some higher regal power. If you're smart, you'll just stay in your room and rely on room service.

During the storm, electricity can temporarily vanish. Even CNN, which was giving weather updates, can disappear if the hotel's satellite dish is struck by a gust of wind. It reminds you that nature is even more powerful than Ted Turner and Larry King.

Living through a hurricane is what Dr Anthony Clare might call a bonding experience. At the very fancy and very French Guanahani hotel — probably the best hotel on St Barts if spending cash doesn't give you a headache — they maintained an immaculate storm service by delivering freshly baked croissants and tall pots of coffee to all the bungalows (with both water and breakfast tray kept dry inside giant bin bags), but around midday we were invited to lunch on the

house in the swanky Bartolomeo restaurant. There on the terrace, greeting the guests in his shorts and T-shirt, was M. Théze, the general manager, asking how we had fared and filling us in on the weather and damage forecasts. As, one by one, the dining room filled with suddenly gossiping residents, you half-expected M. Théze to pray silence and inform us that "This morning we found that Mme Dubois's jewel casket, containing priceless heirlooms, is missing. We believe it may have been stolen. Possibly, it pains me to add, by a resident. Fortunately, M. Hercule Poirot is staying with us and has offered to help solve the mystery. If you would be so kind as to answer a few of his questions..."

If you like your French Caribbean with a more West Indian tang, you can hop on a 12-minute flight to St Martin. The island is half Dutch — naturally that is the less chic half. Although the West Indians in the main town of Marigot were celebrating July 14, French Independence Day, as zealously as the expatriate French, the two cultures

seem to co-exist rather than blend into a new ethnic identity.

You can buy a bowl of bull-foot soup yards away from a café selling perfect French onion soup. But you can't find them both on the same menu. Again, the giant Match supermarket is identical to the one you would find in France — ask for a food shop and West Indians invariably direct you to Match, rather than to the stores that sell "our local type of food" — but there is also an open-air market which seems to sell almost nothing but huge hands of plantains.

The Gallic flavour in St Martin is diluted, partly as a concession to visiting Americans, so it's perfect for those who prefer to sip their Frenchness weak. You never know whether to speak French or English, or to pay in francs or dollars, but every taxi driver and barman will convert your bill into either. At Nina's Kitchen, a friendly food shack-cum-café on Marigot's port, you order your fried plantain and goat curry in French, you pay in dollars and you drink Heineken lager (the most noticeable evidence

that half the island is Dutch).

The beaches on St Martin are from the same textbook paradise as most others in the Caribbean, again with a French accent. At La Samanna — a quietly luxurious hideaway which was once a regular of bigshots such as Nixon, Ford and Onassis, but which (in July at least) seems blissfully bigshot-free — whitewashed cottages spill lazily along the beach in a necklace.

Tear yourself away occasionally for dinner in Marigot. Even better, drive a little further round the bay to a pretty stretch called Grand Gase, which is lined with colourful restaurants and bars and shacks serving cheap barbecues.

You can slope off from all this to the casinos and the shopping malls on the brasher, Dutch side of the island, which is frequented by the shopaholic passengers from the direct jumbo flights from Paris and Amsterdam. But then, why would you want to?

JOE JOSEPH

● The author was a guest of Simply Caribbean.

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Birmingham	Cyprus	13 Jun	7	29270	KING ALKINOOS	3S / SC	£352	£263	£178
Birmingham	Cyprus	13 Jun	7	29270	TASIA MARIS BEACH	3T / HB	£522	£416	£212
Birmingham	Cyprus	04 Jul	14	29270	ANTIGONI	3T / HB	£790	£657	£265
Birmingham	Cyprus	09 Jul	14	29228	LEDRA BEACH	5T / BB	£754	£625	£258
Bournemouth	Cyprus	25 Jun	14	29220	ATLANTICA BAY	4T / HB	£761	£631	£260
Bournemouth	Cyprus	23 Jul	14	29220	LEDRA BEACH	5T / BB	£802	£668	£268
Bristol	Cyprus	25 Jun	14	29224	PHAETHON BEACH	4T / HB	£665	£545	£240
Bristol	Cyprus	13 Jul	14	29268	MARLITA APT	3T / SC	£529	£423	£213
Bristol	Cyprus	17 Aug	7	29268	TASIA MARIS BEACH	3T / HB	£555	£446	£218
Cardiff	Cyprus	04 Jun	14	29226	PHAETHON BEACH	4T / HB	£649	£531	£237
Cardiff	Cyprus	18 Jun	14	29226	LEDRA BEACH	5T / BB	£709	£585	£249
East Midlands	Cyprus	07 Jun	14	29230	LEDRA GDNs APTS	2S / SC	£385	£293	£184
East Midlands	Cyprus	21 Jun	14	29230	LEDRA GDNs APTS	2S / SC	£396	£303	£187
Glasgow	Cyprus	08 Jun	14	29280	KING ALKINOOS	3S / SC	£436	£339	£195
Gatwick	Cyprus	06 Jun	14	29264	MARLITA APT	3T / SC	£451	£352	£198
Gatwick	Cyprus	15 Jun	14	29262	KING ALKINOOS	3S / SC	£431	£334	£194
Gatwick	Cyprus	15 Jun	14	29262	POLYCARPIA	4S / FB	£817	£682	£271
Gatwick	Cyprus	27 Jun	14	29260	MARLITA APT	3T / SC	£465	£365	£200
Gatwick	Cyprus	04 Jul	14	29264	MARLITA APT	3T / SC	£571	£406	£210
Gatwick	Cyprus	13 Jul	14	29262	ANTHEA APTS	2T / SC	£481	£379	£204
Gatwick	Cyprus	13 Jul	14	29262	KING ALKINOOS	3S / SC	£521	£415	£212
Gatwick	Cyprus	13 Jul	14	29262	POLYCARPIA	4S / FB	£861	£721	£280
Luton	Cyprus	31 May	14	29214	ATLANTICA BAY	4T / HB	£725	£599	£252
Luton	Cyprus	07 Jun	14	29214	PHAETHON BEACH	4T / HB	£649	£531	£237
Luton	Cyprus	14 Jun	14	29214	LEDRA BEACH	5T / BB	£709	£585	£249
Luton	Cyprus	13 Jul	14	29266	ANTHEA APTS	2T / SC	£482	£380	£204
Luton	Cyprus	13 Jul	14	29266	KING ALKINOOS	3S / SC	£522	£416	£212
Norwich	Cyprus	21 May	14	29218	LEDRA BEACH	5T / BB	£772	£641	£262
Norwich	Cyprus	16 Jul	14	29218	ATLANTICA STUDIO 3	4T / SC	£533	£426	£214

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مكتبة الأصل

Cuba: The old communist warhorse may be creaking but there's no shortage of atmosphere to soak up

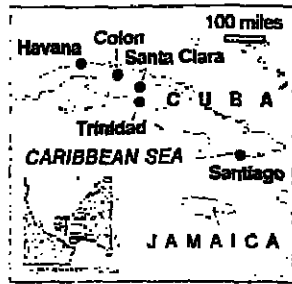
Old Havana appeals while the paint peels

For connoisseurs of decay there is nothing to beat Havana. Even the remotest corners of the former Soviet Union received a lick of paint as recently as 1989, but in Cuba time stopped in 1959.

The ancient Chevs and Plymouths trundling down the mostly empty streets aren't tourist attractions. They are the latest models, apart from a handful of ageing Ladas. The American vendetta hasn't made life easy for Cuba's inhabitants but that was more than offset by Soviet subsidies. Yet Cuba seems on its knees. You don't need to study street figures: just stand in the trade and observe the inertia.

It's still a fascinating place, even if it is crumbling. Buildings sometimes collapse from ill health. Those still standing are faded and peeling. The benches lack slats, lampstands lack bulbs. Yet Havana is wonderfully grand, for all that. After the dinkiness of other Caribbean capitals such as Nassau or St Pierre, it's wonderful to walk along boulevards as spacious as anything in Mexico City.

Havana is filled with reminders of its former grandeur, such as the flamboyant Gran Teatro, the Art Deco Bacardi building, the dramatic curve of shoreline called the Malecon. It's a city of boulevards, domed public buildings, harbour fortifications, villas, lofty palms, Bellas Artes exuberance. Along the Prado, the once



fashionable shady promenade linking the Parque Central and the waterfront, marble paths and ornate stone benches are flanked by houses in styles from neo-baroque to Moorish and classical. By day, schoolchildren are put through their gymnastic paces. By night, sex tourists prowl.

Indeed, night gives Havana a medieval atmosphere. The streets are dimly lit, when lit at all. Figures lurk in doorways — not threateningly, but because they have nothing else to do and it's usually too hot to retreat indoors. At floodlit round-the-clock buildings sites in Old Havana, joint-venture companies are racing to put up new hotels to accommodate the million or more tourists expected here in 1997. Prostitutes lurk near the hotels, but they now risk a long prison sentence, so their numbers have been reduced to a trickle.

To some extent Havana's dilapidation is the source of its charm: so many old city centres elsewhere have been restored to death. But the underside of the picturesque in Havana is the privation of its inhabitants. Cuba must be one of the most

fertile places on earth: you wouldn't know it from looking at the shops. What's for sale is what nobody wants to buy. The few markets have little to offer other than oranges, bananas and sweet potatoes. The patriotic slogans with which the country is emblazoned ("Revolution with Fidel!" "Che, Your Ideas Live On!") cannot disguise national failure. Cafeterias have no food, a beer costs a week's wages. If you have dollars, of course, it's a different story.

Visitors flock into Old Havana. Its main thoroughfare, Obispo, passes splendid 19th-century pharmacies, the imposing palazzi of defunct hotels, awful handicrafts shops (all Cuban souvenirs are tatty), cafes, secondhand bookshops, and La Florida, a Hemingway haunt that is now Cuba's priciest restaurant.

Obispo emerges into the Plaza de Armas, a flower-filled square dominated by the magnificent Spanish-colonial municipal palace and a moated castle. Near by, the cathedral square is packed with souvenir stalls and roving musicians. No tourist escapes the Bodega del Medio, the cramped bar (and overpriced restaurant) where Hemingway drank mojitos. I made my sole concession to the Hemingway cult and dutifully ordered mine: a refreshing blend of lime juice, mint, soda water, sugar, ice and rum.

There's greater calm south of the Plaza de Armas, where few restorers or hoteliers have ventured, where women with their hair in rollers eye the few passers by, where laundry sails across balconies with cracked shutters, and where decayed courtyards are home to dozens of families.

None of all Havana is squalid. The once smart residential districts of Vedado and Miramar are still filled with villas and mansions, some derelict, others used as embassies or institutes. Insiders know that here you will find the best restaurants, shops and discos.

There's little to see in the way of historical monuments, but now, as 50 years ago, this, rather than Old Havana, is the place to live.

Since public transport is non-existent or hopelessly overcrowded, the only practical way to explore Cuba is by car. Many visitors have to pay a bribe to obtain one. I had to collect my car a day earlier than I needed it — which comes to the same thing. I left the car outside the excellent Hotel Inglaterra, where I was staying. A guardian keeps an eye on the car



In Cuba, time stopped in 1959. The ancient Chevs and Plymouths trundling down the almost-empty streets of Havana are the latest models

park overnight. Rental cars tend to be new Peugeots, a useful source of spare parts to Cuban entrepreneurs, so it's worth ensuring your car is still intact after sunrise.

I sped out of Havana past the eastern beaches and malodorous oilfields. It was amazingly hot: snakes slithered across the roads leading towards the old colonial town of Trinidad. A bus ahead of me drove over a pig, which squealed its last. A car whacked a goat into eternity. Considering how few vehicles there were on the road, this was quite a toll of valued domestic animals.

There followed three hours of mountain driving, mostly in total darkness over seriously potholed roads. A flat tyre up here and I would be spending the night in the car. But I eventually made it to Trinidad. I stayed at the tranquil Las Cuevas Motel, an attractive collection of hillside bungalows — I shared mine with an amiable frog — and, after dinner, wandered through the

old town, where people meandered through the square. The next day, I explored its churches (packed for Mass), cobbled lanes, and mansions converted into historical museums. Along the streets, tall grilled windows allowed glimpses into spacious, well-ventilated living areas with patios behind. The Trinidadians may be impoverished but they live in style.

The next morning I set off

for Havana. With so few operational buses in Cuba, everyone hitchhikes. But the signals can be confusing. Some women waving excitedly are prostitutes; others are merely trying to get to work. I offered lifts at random, and soon had a fine collection of old cronies with medical afflictions. We bounced through Cienfuegos, its Prado a handsome but provincial echo of Havana's, and on towards the

capital. Five miles before Havana, the skies opened — and a tyre burst. Changing the tyre, I saw a man approach through the downpour. He was carrying a machete and owned, he explained, the farm nearby. That's nice, I thought, and awaited the robbery and murder. But he proved harmless and helpful.

My remaining day in Havana was devoted to cigars. I toured the Partagas factory,

which no visitor to Cuba should miss, and drooled at Montecristo No 2s and Partagas 986s rolled before my eyes. Surprisingly, prices varied greatly, and were usually cheaper at hotels than at the factories.

When Fidel eventually lets slip the reins of power, all bets, politically, are off. But it's fair to assume that this creaking old communist warhorse will be swiftly dismantled. The most gifted and cultured people in the Caribbean will once again be free to express themselves, the coastline will be ruthlessly exploited by mass tourism, empty highways will be jammed with tour buses, and those of us who had the fortune to visit Cuba in its final, sleazy, atmospheric days, will mutter: "It's not what it was." But life will be better for the Cubans, and that's a price that I will happily pay.

STEPHEN BROOK
The author was a guest of Regent Holidays.

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Britain: Magic wells, lakeside walks... Robin Neillands selects the best hotels for a Valentine weekend



Guests at Ynyshir Hall in Powys can enjoy superb food and even take the dog along

The ultimate bedside manor

BRITAIN'S festivals are increasingly affected by the extension factor. Christmas now lasts a fortnight. Easter can be extended to a week and St Valentine's Day, which falls on a Friday in 1997 — nominated by the AA as "the Year of Romance", honestly — can be stretched to a full weekend. Leaping at this opportunity, a number of Britain's hoteliers have

organised Valentine weekends, with all the smoochy extras: the welcome champagne, the four-poster bed, the red rose on the pillow and — in lieu of the blindfolded violinist — a tinkling piano. Some even have a touch of humour. Here are a selection of romantic breaks — but who said they had to be restricted to one weekend of the year?

ENGLAND

LANGSHOTT MANOR (01293 786680), a 16th-century country house near Gatwick, propose a *Liaison D'Amour* Valentine's Night for two, dinner, bed and breakfast, plus a gift of Darrington crystal, for £205. Dancing cheek-to-cheek can take place during the Valentine's night dance at the Runnymede Hotel on the banks of the Thames at Egham, Surrey (01784 436171). Extras include wine on arrival and use of the hotel spa, all for £75, per head, per night, dinner and dance included.

The Lake District is always romantic and the Rothay Garden Hotel at Grasmere (015394 35334) offers a Valentine package, with half-board or four-poster beds, a basket of flowers and the obligatory champagne on arrival, plus chocolates and a full five-course dinner, for £86 per head per night. Romance is on offer at the Rampsack Country House Hotel on Ullswater, the perfect base for romantic strolls, right on the edge of the lake. Prices from £65 per night, including dinner; reservations from 0181-390 8515.

Those who prefer towns can spend a Valentine's Weekend in the romantic city of Chester where the Chester Grosvenor Hotel (01244 324024) offers a Romantic Weekend With Your True Love, starting with a champagne reception, followed by a dinner for two,

serenaded by a classical guitarist in the La Brassiere restaurant — plus a heart-shaped box of truffles. Prices from £70 per head, per night, for two nights.

Moving south, the Angel Hotel in Midhurst, Sussex (01730 812421) is offering dinner in its excellent Cowdray restaurant on Valentine's Day, as part of a weekend package, at prices from £62.50 per person per night. A pianist will play and four-poster beds are available. The Hotel de la Bere, at Southam near Cheltenham (01242 237771) has a two-night Valentine's Break, with chocolates on arrival, pre-dinner cocktails, a candlelit dinner, champagne and a red rose on the pillow later, plus breakfast in bed next morning — and a 4pm check out on Sunday; all this at £190 for two people, for two nights.

Cornwall can offer a weekend at the Well House Hotel (01579 342001) at St Keyne near Liskeard, where the nearby well has magic powers: the first partner in a marriage to drink from the well will attain mastery in the relationship and rule the roost thereafter. Worrying, but well worth a Valentine weekend at prices from £240 per couple, for two nights, with Dinner for Lovers, bed, and breakfast. Devon romantics need look no further than beautiful Lewtrenchard Manor hotel at Lewdown near Okehampton (01566 783256). An oak-panelled dining room, superb food, log fires, roomy bed-

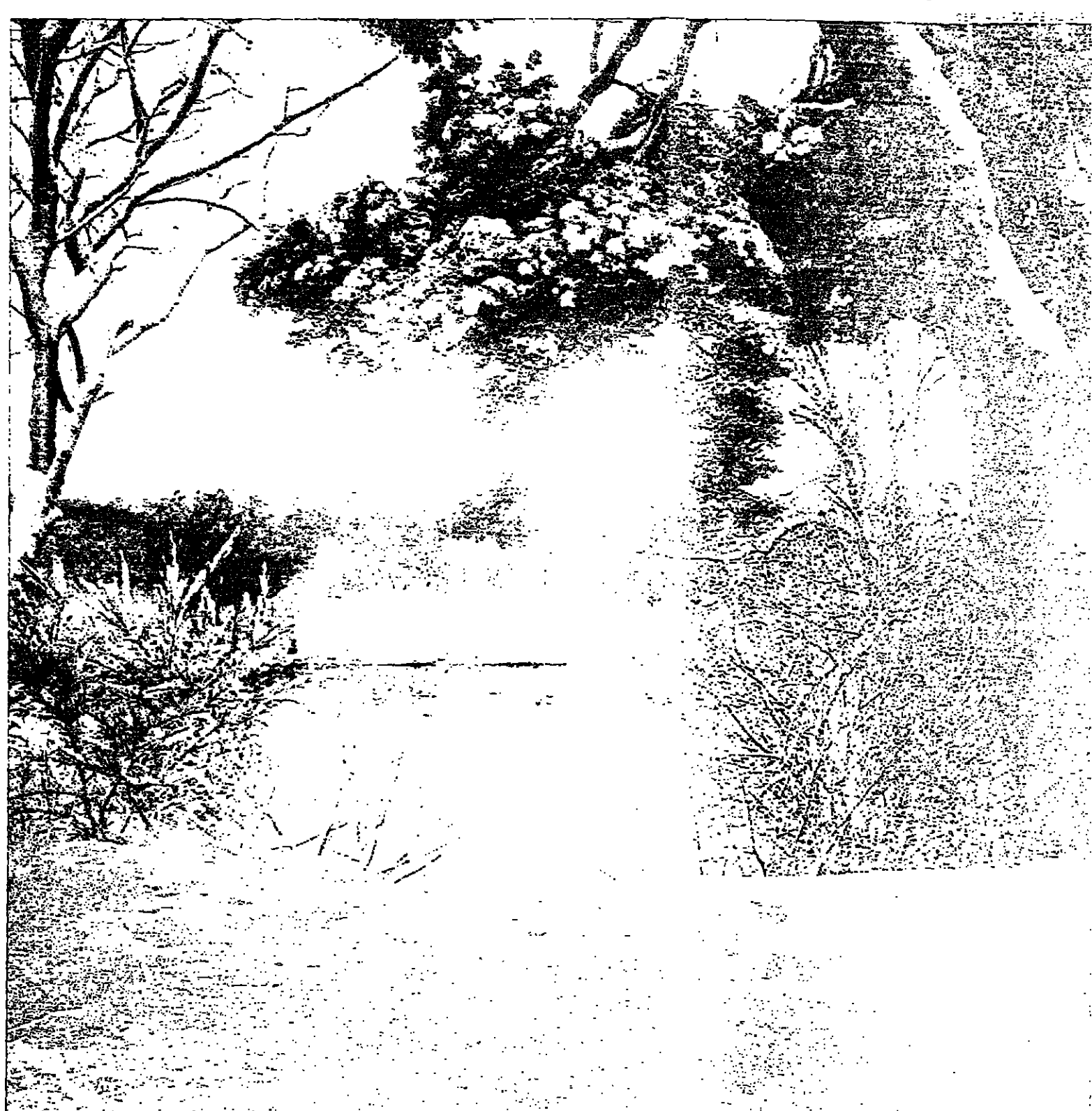
rooms and glorious Devon in every direction and a special Valentine's weekend rate for two of £242.50 for two nights, plus a Valentine's dinner.

London's hotels are also rising to the challenge — at a price. Brown's Hotel in Mayfair offers a Valentine Weekend at £790 per couple, with breakfast and one dinner, champagne, a dozen roses, tickets to a show and shopping "privileges" at shops like Charbonnel & Walker. The Franklin Hotel in Knightsbridge (0171-584 5533) — voted London's Most Romantic Hotel by an American magazine for its beautiful rooms and setting in a tree-lined square — offers a double room, champagne, and a Valentine's breakfast, for £200, while the Portobello Hotel in Notting Hill (0171-727 3777), which claims to have the sexiest bedrooms in London, is proposing a Wickedly Wicked Valentine's Weekend, with the statutory champagne, a Lover's Breakfast and a "naughty" Valentine present for £185.

Guests at the elegant Goring Hotel in Victoria can invite the pianist to play love songs on Valentine's night and since George Goring, that most amiable of hosts, adores sheep and features life-sized toy sheep in the decor, musical requests are invited with an ovine theme: *It Had to Be Eve, Wool Me! Agin!*, and soon. Prices from £250 per night, per couple, include champagne and dinner and a toy sheep in every bedroom on request. Details from the Goring Hotel on (0171-396 4000).

WALES

A PORTRAIT of your Love, painted by the artist-proprietor Peter Kindred, is the prize for the winner of the Valentine's Day charity raffle in the Tyddyn Llan country house hotel at Landrillo, North Wales (01490 440264) plus champagne and red roses for all guests. Prices from £175 per



There are superb walks along the banks of the River Spey from the Craigellachie Hotel in Banffshire which also has an award-winning chef

head, for two nights, including dinner and Sunday lunch. Another artist, Rob Reen, welcomes guests at the delightful Ynyshir Hall hotel, at Machynlleth, Powys (01654 781309). Lovers here will enjoy superb food and great walks. You can even take your own dog.

Swans, which mate for life and float on the hotel's private lake, provide inspiration at the Lake Country House hotel at Llangunlith, Powys (01591 620202). This was voted one of Britain's most romantic hotels by the AA. All rooms have a canopy or four-poster bed and two nights' dinner bed and breakfast costs from £85 per head per night, including champagne in the bedroom and a box of chocolates.

SCOTLAND

THE CRAIGELLACHIE Hotel, Craigellachie, Banffshire is just right for romantically-minded couples, with a bar crammed with malt whiskies, an award-winning chef in the kitchen and superb walks, through gorgeous, Speyside scenery just outside the door. Prices from £60 per head per night, dinner included; reservations from Crystal Britain (0151-390 8513). Guests at the friendly Johnstounburn House hotel, at Humber near

Edinburgh (01375 833696) can enjoy a Valentine's weekend serenaded on Friday night by the manager, Ken Chernoff, on his saxophone and enjoying a jazz concert on Saturday. Prices from £30 per head, dinner, bed and breakfast. Regal Hotels (0345 334400) are offering special Valentine's breaks in 20 of their hotels, including the Athol Palace Hotel at Pitlochry in Perthshire (01794 472400). Valentine extras include cocktails, complimentary champagne at bedtime and breakfast in bed. Valentine Break price £190 for two people for two nights.

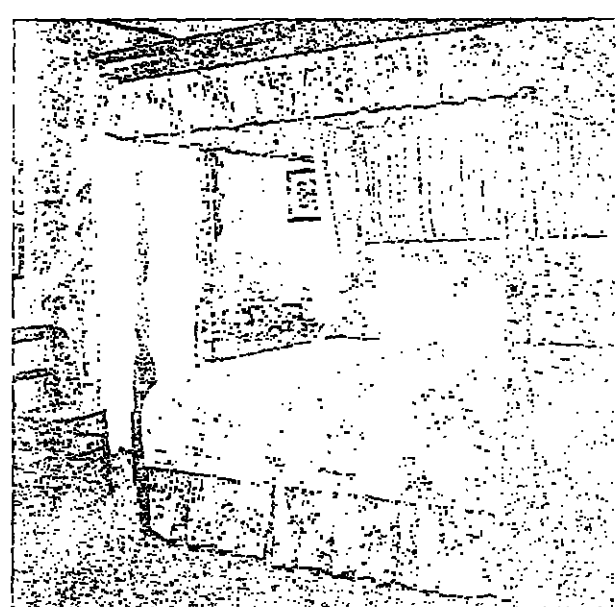
NORTHERN IRELAND

LOVERS seeking to affirm their love should head for the Celtic Love Stone in County Antrim. This Bronze Age stone bestows never-ending love on every couple who shake hands through the hole that pierces it. That done, head for the nearby Dunadry Hotel and Country Club at Templepatrick, the ideal base for a romantic Valentine's break at £92.50 per head, for two nights, including a special romantic dinner. Reservations: 018-90 432474. The Slieve Donard Hotel at Newcastle in Co. Down (013967 23681) has a special 1997 Valentine's weekend

break, dinner bed and breakfast and the usual entertainment, while the old and romantic Londonderry Arms Hotel (01574 335255) on the Antrim coast near the Giant's Causeway, offers a bargain Valentine's break, £65 for two nights and a special dinner on February 14.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

THE MAYFAIR Hotel, St Helier, Jersey, is offering a two-night Valentine Weekend break, including return catamaran crossing from Weymouth from £90, or by air from £115. Romantic joys here include a special dinner with dishes like Heartbeat Halibut and Cuddle-up Cheeses. If you can survive these and uncurl your toes, you can frolic in the indoor pool. Reservations: 01534 50529.



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JILL CRAWSHAW'S INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TIPS

Tie up the red tape in advance

HOLIDAYMAKERS taking up last-minute bargains to long-haul destinations such as the Gambia, Kenya and India, can face unforeseen health and visa problems.

The Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine advises a visit to your GP at least a month before departure to place in the necessary vaccinations and malaria precautions.

The school operates a Travel Health Advice Line (0891 17211; 45p a minute off-peak, 50p at other times). The red tape involved in acquiring visas is highlighted by *Holiday Whizz*. Although many countries will issue visas on the same day from their visa section, almost invariably in London, to those prepared to come in person and queue, postal applications to such countries as India, China and Russia can take up to a month. If you fail to allow enough time to get your visa, you may risk forfeiting your "bargain".

The alternative is to pay £40 or more to a visa agency to procure it in time. For many countries, your passport must be valid for at least six, in some cases 12, months on the day of your arrival.

Austrian angles

A NUMBER of hostels located in some of Austria's main tourist regions that are suitable for international travellers are listed by the Austrian National Tourist Office in London (0171-629 0461). Prices range from £5.50-£14 per night B&B.

The small hostel at 1,600 metres (5,250ft) on Goldeck can only be reached by cable car, with skiing from the front door in the winter, and water sports on Lake Millstatt in the summer. The hostel in Feldkirch was originally used as a leper house in the 14th century, then offering short-term accommodation for the homeless, but was redesigned for its present use in 1983.

Rothstein Castle in Styria is about 300 years old; it offers hikes in the mountains and has a ski lift at the front door.

Sephardic Spain

AN 11-day fly-drive through Jewish Spain from Unicorn Holidays (01582 834000) begins in Madrid, then traces the impact of the Sephardic communities, which lived in the country until the end of the 15th century.

The route takes in Toledo, with its well preserved Jewish quarter

where there are two synagogues, one of which dates back to the 13th century; the walled city of Cordoba; Cordoba, with its 14th-century synagogue, and Seville.

The tour costs from £1,058 per person including flights, car hire, and B&B at paradores en route.

Bird island

CORSICA's spectacular mountains, meadows and maquis harbour numerous endemic plant and bird species, many of which can hopefully be spotted on Naturetrek's eight-day spring bird-watching and botanical tour (01962 733051).

Full-board accommodation is provided in mountain auberges in the hilltop villages of Evisa, and in the valley of La Restonica in the heart of the Corsican National Park from which holidaymakers set out on walks each day in the company of experts, binoculars at the ready. The price, with flights included, is £890.

Majorcan gems

WITH THE exception of a few over-developed resorts on the east coast and either side of Palma (itself a delightful little capital), the much underrated island of Majorca can provide some of the best holidays in the Mediterranean. Deep in the interior and tucked away in tiny hamlets, specialist Castaways (01737 812255) offers country manors and village houses, many with their own pools, and private transport from the airport.

Dating back to 1242, La Reserva Rotana belonged to the Majorcan family of the Marquis de Villalonga, and as well as a pool and tennis court, it has its own private nine-hole golf course with a pro. A week's B&B (with flight) costs from £909 per person.

A simpler converted village house, the Hotel d'Es Puig mentioned by Robert Graves, in the late poet's hideaway of Delia, costs from £479 a week B&B with flights.

Sail away

TWENTY years after the much-loved Unicorn Castle ships ended their 120-year long sailings to South Africa, the RMS *St Helena*, a working ship that carries mail and cargo, plus 128 passengers, will create the final voyage of RMS Windsor Castle.

On August 7 southbound and September 20 northbound, the *St Helena* will sail between Cardiff and Cape Town, via Tenerife, the Azores, Ascension Island and St Helena, Napoleon's last home in exile. The three-week voyages to or from Cape Town cost from £2,865 per person



The magnificent walled city of Cáceres is one of the sights on Unicorn Holidays' tour through Jewish Spain

including the one-way flight. Details of this journey and other cargo passenger ships from Strand Voyages (0171-836 6363).

Water works

WITH 41 centres around the coast, thalassotherapy is very much the buzz in France: it is the sea water health treatment dating back to Hippocrates, where you are clung in mud and seaweed, then soaked, steamed and pummeled — all to help restore your body's self-defence systems and natural balance. Free lists from the

French National Tourist Office (0891 244123). Weekend breaks from Erna Low (0171-834 2841).

Plans for 1999

WHAT WILL you be doing on December 31, 1999? Abercrombie & Kent (0171-730 9600) has issued a Millennium brochure. Each of its holidays includes a gala evening on December 31, 1999, and locations range from Jack's Camp in the Kalahari Desert to a cruise round the Galapagos Islands. A 14-night Great Africa Air Cruise will begin in Egypt, continuing through Zimba-

bwe, Tanzania and Kenya, with a new year's celebration at Victoria Falls; it costs about £11,500. The millennium can also be welcomed at the Taj Mahal on a seven-night tour featuring the highlights of Moghul India, costing about £1,496.

Ski insurance

TAKING out insurance for a skiing holiday can have its pitfalls. For information on what to look for in a policy and the most common exclusions — snowboarding, for example, may not be covered — see Weekend Money, pages 46-47.

Taking the Mickey?

WE visited EuroDisney on the Sunday last autumn that spanned both the English and French half-term holidays. The weather was overcast and there was little lustre about the Magic Kingdom.

The train from Paris was reassuringly quiet. Those heading for Disney were, surprisingly, mainly adults without children. Not so when we reached the entrance to the park itself. There the crowds were thronging, the air filled with European tongues. Passage through the turnstiles was swift and efficient, but the crowds heading for the various rides were rush-hour thick. We needed a warning.

The nearest restaurant had queues in the filter pens of great length and complexity. We managed to get some coffee from an outdoor kiosk but even there a 15-minute wait in the rain was required.

For our ten-year-old son, this much-postponed visit had been the source of eager anticipation. I could see he was going quieter and gloomier with the growing realisation that EuroDisney was most unlikely to fulfil its promise.

He has been a railway buff since the age of four and wanted to ride on the track that circles the park. We tried the Main Street Station. Closed. We asked why. "Only for today", with a shrug of Gallic insouciance.

Half. Our request was quietly but firmly stated. We had paid for a range of services that had been advertised. We had done so in the expectation that we could gain reasonable access to those services. We did not think a series of very long waits represented reasonable access: refund our money, please.

Not possible, we were told. It states on the back of the ticket that no refunds are possible. But we could not know that until we actually bought the ticket, we protested. A small crowd was listening as we reiterated our demand, adding that had Disney publicised the estimated waiting times we would never have bought the ticket in the first place. Our voices remained calm but we were insistent. Then a presumably even higher manager conceded Mickey's case. He credited us with the Fr420 and waved us off the park.

the long, additional line of people waiting to enter the roped-up area. We sought guidance from an attendant. Yes, he agreed, it was unlikely that waiting time for any attraction would be less than half an hour. Had we considered the Visionarium? The queue there was not really as bad as it looked. What was the Visionarium? He mumbled something about Michael Jackson on a huge screen.

We had paid Fr420 (£46) for the day. We were expected to queue for up to an hour to gain entry to any attraction on offer. For most of the waiting time we would be subject to the wet autumn weather.

We decided to ask for our money back and went to the "hospitality" desk in City

Kevin McNeany

Kevin McNeany

Kevin McNeany

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ITALY

ROME: Central district, villa with pool, garden, swimming pool, tennis, etc. Tel: 06/4781 1111.

BALEARENES: Exclusive villa in exclusive location, 300m from sea, 100m from beach, 100m from town, 100m from airport. Tel: 0122 555 1111.

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VIAREGGIO: Exclusive villa in exclusive location, 100m from sea, 100m from beach, 100m from town, 100m from airport. Tel: 059 222 1111.

VILLAS and townhouses in many locations including: Florence, Rome, Venice, etc. Tel: 011 222 1111.

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MALTA & GOZO: Exclusive villa in exclusive location, 100m from sea, 100m from beach, 100m from town, 100m from airport. Tel: 011 222 1111.

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THE BEST OF SPAIN & PORTUGAL: Exclusive villa in exclusive location, 100m from sea, 100m from beach, 100m from town, 100m from airport. Tel: 011 222 1111.

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SPECIAL INTEREST

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CHESS

by Raymond Keene

THE Leicestershire grandmaster Mark Hebden scored perhaps the best result of his life when he shared joint first prize in Britain's premier tournament at Hastings. He distinguished himself by beating both John Nunn and Michael Adams. Here is how he overcame Britain's number two player.

W: Hebden, B: Adams
Hastings, December 1996
Wade/Pillsbury Defence

1 d4 d6 2 e4 Nf6
3 Nc3 c5

Adams is not noted as a theoretician, and frequently chooses off-beat openings to foil his opponents' preparation.

4 N3 Bg4 5 h3 Bb5
6 g4 Bg7 7 Qe2 e6

Black's queen's bishop has been driven out of play and White also enjoys a spatial advantage. Yet White has been obliged to loosen his own pawn structure. It is on this that Black bases his hopes.

8 Bg5 Be7 9 h4 h5. White's threat of h5 makes this necessary.

10 Bxf6 gxf6 11 Bh3 bxc4
12 Bxg4 d5 13 exd5 cxd5
14 h5 Bh7 15 Rg1 Ne6
16 0-0 Qc7

A plausible move which maintains the possibility of casting queenside for Black. After the game, however, 16... Rb8 was recommended with the possible counter-attacking plan of ... Qc5 and ... Nd4.

17 Bh3 Qf4 18 Kd1 Bf5. It is a shame to trade this powerful bishop which is aligned menacingly against White's king. Black's motivation was doubtless to avoid any sacrifice by White against e6 and to undermine the defences of White's pawn on h5.

19 Bxf5 Qxf5. Apparently winning the pawn on h5 but White saves it with a neat trick.

20 Ne1 0-0-0. If 20... Qxh5 21 Rg6 Bf8 22 Rxd8 Qxh8 23 Nxd5 regaining the pawn with advantage. Black could play 20... Rxf5, but after 21 Rg6 Bf8 Black's pieces are tied down.

21 Rh1 Rxd8 22 Rd3 Rg4
23 h6 Kb8 24 f3 Rxd4

Surprisingly, Black has won White's d-pawn, which seemed well guarded, not the h-pawn.

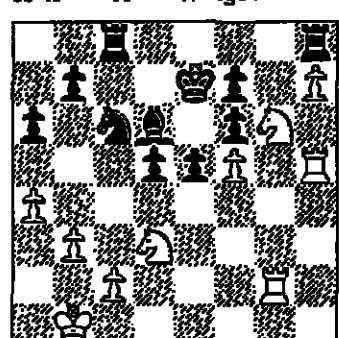
25 Qh2 Qf4. Natural enough

but 25... Qe5 would be stronger.
26 Qxf4 Rxf4 27 Ne2 Re4 28 h3
Re5. The unfortunate exchange of
queens has left Black's rook out of
play and now White's passed h-
pawn becomes a force.

29 f4 Bf8 30 h7 Ne7
31 Rg3 Re8 32 Nd4 a6
33 Nd3 Ke7 34 a4 Kd6
35 Rh5 Kd7 36 Rg2 Ne6

The psychology of this game is interesting. If Black were to mark time, White could not break through, but with an extra pawn Black feels he must still play for the full point. In so doing he underestimates White's scope.

37 Nf3 Bd6 38 Nh4 Ke7
39 f5 e5 40 Ng6+



A horrible shock. By this temporary sacrifice, White forces the win of material. Black has been coasting too long and now sees serious dangers lurking.

40... bxc6 41 fxc6 Ke6
42 g7 Rxf7 43 Rxf7 Rf6
44 Nf2 e4 45 Ng4 Bf4

Necessary to stop Nh6. The position still requires technical finesse from White to cope with Black's army of passed pawns.

46 Nf6 Bxf6 47 Rxf6 Ne7
48 Rh2 Kf7 49 Rg8 Kg8
50 Ke1 d4 51 Rg1 b5
52 Rg4 f5 53 Rf5 bxc4
54 bxc4 f4 55 Re5

By means of his subtle temporising with the rook, White has finally forced Black's pawns into a position of weakness.

55... f3 56 Kd1 d3
57 cxd3 exd3 58 Ke1 Ne6
59 Re3 d2+ 60 Kxd2 Nd4
61 Re4 Nb3+ 62 Ke3 Kxg7
63 Rh4 Ne5 64 Re4

Black resigns.

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

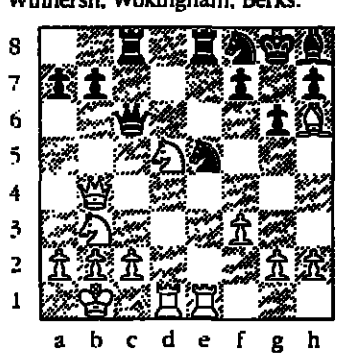
THIS position is from the game Van Mil - Reindermann, Wijk aan Zee 1993.

Black has tried to preserve his king's bishop by retreating it to h8, but the drawback is that his king is now very constricted. How did White make the most of this?

Send answers on a postcard to *The Times*, Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The first correct answer drawn on Thursday will win a year's subscription to the Staunton Society, which includes a free invitation to the annual dinner at Simpson's-in-the-Strand. The answer will be published next Saturday.

Last week's solution: 1 Ng6+

Last week's winner: J. Townsend, Wincersh, Wokingham, Berks.



PUNCHLINE

READERS are invited to write an amusing caption for the cartoon (right), from *The Strand Magazine* (reproduced from Westminster Libraries, Sherlock Holmes Collection, Marylebone Library).

The cartoon will be printed again next week with a caption from those submitted.

Send caption suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to: Strand Caption 36, Weekend, *The Times*, Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

The Editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, January 29.



HELPING A SMALL FAT CHILD BUILD A CASTLE



Mrs Horlick had driven a hard bargain with the board of Morgan Grenfell

The winning caption for last week's cartoon (above) was submitted by P. Barlow of Dunoon, Argyll

WORD WATCHING

By Philip Howard

CAPITUL
a. Head of an Etruscan column
b. A Toulouse magistrate
c. Edinburgh

CORDYL
a. A newt
b. A warming drink
c. The dilated heart

CAROTEL
a. A fruit basket
b. A Byzantine charioteer
c. A gondolier of Ravenna

CONICOPOLY
a. Selling in paper cones
b. A clerk
c. A bantam with hairy feet

Answers on page 19

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott



Join Buzz Lightyear and Woody in Disney Interactive's Toy Story CD-Rom

FEW THINGS seem quite as rewarding as getting *Toy Story's* pull-string cowboy Woody to do his intoxicating dance of delight around in a circle. His jolly jitterbug is a magic moment from the Disney cartoon and it is also caught perfectly, acting as a scrumptious donkey's carrot, when you complete any of the 17 levels of Disney Interactive's *Toy Story* CD-Rom for Windows.

Mirroring the plotline of the film, Woody *et al* come to life in their magical world when adults aren't around. Woody, favourite toy of young Andy, falls out with the newcomer in toyland, Buzz Lightyear.

After their initial spat, Woody and Buzz make up and, with the help of the other toys, take on evil Sid, the toy-torturing boy who lives next door, then make it back to the safety of Andy's bedroom.

The graphics in the game are superlative — comfortably large and uncluttered. After helping Woody to jump, duck, dive, bounce and lasso his way across each level, a few pages of text then advance the storyline to the next challenge.

Woody and Buzz are joined at various times by the Green Army Men platoon, heavyweight wres-

ler Rocky Gibraltar, Rex the dinosaur and others. Collecting stars along the journey boosts health.

Most levels usually take two or three attempts to complete successfully and there is never a dull moment. *Toy Story* CD-Rom is intended for players aged eight and up and, thanks to great clarity in the instructions, even the youngest of users could easily install it.

This CD-Rom version is an adaptation of the *Toy Story* game first released for 16-bit consoles, such as Nintendo's SNES. A similarly adapted Disney title is *Donald in Cold Shadow*, a platform game starring the duck and now out on Windows CD-Rom, having originally appeared as the 16-bit console game *Donald in Maui Mallard*.

With rich, colourful graphics, the action is fast-paced as you energetically guide Donald through 23 levels in his bid to save an island paradise from destruction. The settings, which swim with detail, include the bottom of the sea, magical underworlds, volcanoes and the all-important Ninja train-

ing grounds where you learn how to morph Donald into a mighty Ninja warrior. It is also aimed at players aged eight and up. While Disney has released several titles for lesser games consoles, so far it has only released one for the Sony PlayStation — *Mickey's Wild Adventure*. This must have seemed a great idea on paper but although the end product looks

dreamy, the platform action engages poorly. *Mickey's Wild Adventure* borrows a mish-mash of scenes from Mickey's more memorable film credits, like *Steamboat Willie*, *The Mad Doctor*, *Lonesome Ghosts*, *Moose Hunters* and *The Prince and the Pauper*.

Despite the familiar settings, gameplay is often pedantic while Mickey's regular linking sequences, unlike Woody's in *Toy Story*, are instantly forgettable.

Our *Cyberspace Twenty-Nine* competition asked you for Top Tips with computer users in mind. Entries poured in thick and fast. There were so many excellent tips that judging the competition to find one overall winner and three runners-up was no mean feat.

Our three runners-up, who win *Pison Siena* organisers, were I. Macavish of Romney Marsh, Kent, S. Welch of Stockport, Cheshire, and N. Salter of Thame, Oxon. Their tips have already appeared in earlier columns. Our overall winner is Gary Mason of St Albans, whose masterful Top Tip appears below.

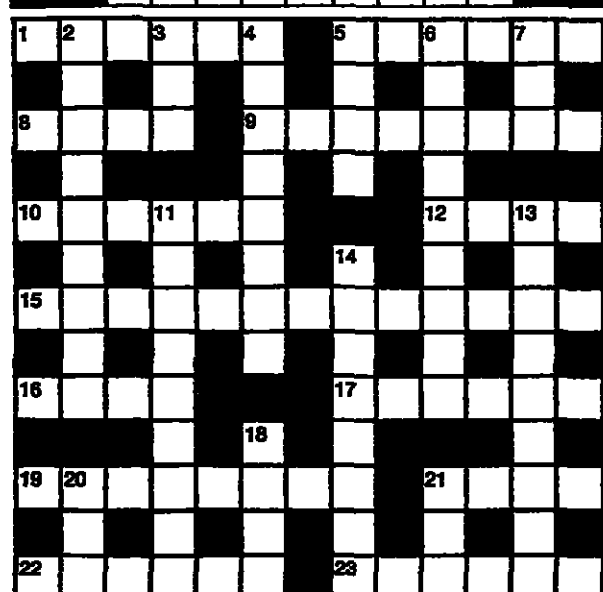
He wins an AST Advantage 9306, worth £2,799, which features a 200MHz Intel Pentium processor, 32Mb EDO Ram and 3Gb hard-disc plus a package of starter software. The *Pison Siena* palmtops, worth £229 each, have a full 1Mb memory and boast comprehensive organiser features such as diary, telephone book and spread sheet.

Thank you to all who entered *Cyberspace Twenty-Nine*. By way of consolation to those of you whose entries were felt by the judges to be worthy of honourable mention, we will continue running more of your Top Tips for the next few weeks — and for each one that appears we will send a software title from the Microsoft catalogue.

Staying with competition news, a jeroobam of Moët & Chandon champagne is on its way to our end of year quiz winner, Richard Gibson of Winchester and, coming soon, readers will be able to win a top-of-the-range Polaroid digital camera.

"Make friends and learn more about the Internet. Just go into any Cybercafé, switch off a machine, and say to the operator: 'Hello, what's all this about Surfing the Net?'" G. Mason, St Albans.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1000

- ACROSS
- Make accessible; speak more freely (4,2)
 - Refund of excess (6)
 - Attention; notice (taken) (4)
 - Remember its Fifth (8)
 - Level, polished (6)
 - French clerical title, eg Lisa's (4)
 - Points, levels of being less good (13)
 - Labyrinth (4)
 - Money of Portugal (6)
 - Capital of Chile (8)
 - Greek falling stones (4)
 - Ship; liquid holder (6)
 - Caught sight of (6)
- DOWN
- Inflamed-lung illness (9)
 - Show agreement; Cain's land (3)
 - Bat in emergency (baseball) (5-3)
 - Wander (4)
 - Pompously high-flown (in speech) (9)
 - Digit; sounds like haul (3)
 - Egg dishes (9)
 - Subsistence level (9)
 - Inspiring horror, disgust (8)
 - His conversion celebrated today; — Jones, dance (4)
 - Champion; point-winning serve (3)
 - Jump; beer ingredient (3)

SOLUTION TO NO 999

ACROSS: 1 Dabble 4 Send up 8 Shindig 10 Probe 11 Skip 12 Marauder 14 Foundling 15 Audition 20 Dame 22 Steam 23 Million 24 Demure 25 Crayon

DOWN: 1 Desist 2 Bailiff 3 Ludo 5 Emphasis 6 Drood 7 Poetry 9 Guardroom 13 Customer 15 Gashly 16 Massed 17 Petain 19 Dream 21 Blur

PRICES INCLUDE DELIVERY TO EU CUSTOMERS (rest of the world add £1 per item). SEND SAE FOR OTHER TITLES. AMERICAN DOLLAR CHEQUES ONLY. (US\$1.00)

TIMES CROSSWORDS: Books £10.95 each. The Times Crossword Book 2 (100 puzzles) £12.95. The Times Crossword Book 3 (100 puzzles) £12.95. The Times Crossword Book 4 (100 puzzles) £12.95. The Times Crossword Book 5 (100 puzzles) £12.95. The Times Crossword Book 6 (100 puzzles) £12.95. The Times Crossword Book 7 (100 puzzles) £12.95. The Times Crossword Book 8 (100 puzzles) £12.95. The Times Crossword Book 9 (100 puzzles) £12.95. The Times Crossword Book 10 (100 puzzles) £12.95.

TIMES COMPUTER CROSSWORDS by David Atkinson — Crosswords on Computer 3.5 (includes 100 puzzles) £10.95. Crosswords on Computer 3.5 (includes 100 puzzles) £10.95. Crosswords on Computer 3.5 (includes 100 puzzles) £10.95. Crosswords on Computer 3.5 (includes 100 puzzles) £10.95. Crosswords on Computer 3.5 (includes 100 puzzles) £10.95. Crosswords on Computer 3.5 (includes 100 puzzles) £10.95. Crosswords on Computer 3.5 (includes 100 puzzles) £10.95. Crosswords on Computer 3.5 (includes 100 puzzles) £10.95. Crosswords on Computer 3.5 (includes 100 puzzles) £10.95.

THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

No 3394: Angles by RadGraDeg

POSITIVE integers 1-26 are allocated to each upper-case letter of the alphabet in no particular order. No digit begins with a zero. Answers with fractional parts are entered into the grid with the fractional part omitted, eg 135.79 would be entered as 135.

Pd, Qm, Rs denotes an angle of P degrees, Q minutes and R seconds of arc; Pg, Qc, Rcc denotes an angle of P grades, Q centesimal minutes and R centesimal seconds; there are 100g in a right angle and 234g, 59c, 78cc may be written 234.5978g; P° denotes P radians — there are 11 radians in two right angles; PAQ denotes P raised to the power of Q; sqrt[P] denotes the square root of P; sin[P] etc denote the trigonometrical functions of angle P.

- ACROSS
- W x cosec[Ws]
 - C x cosec[Coc]
 - (No of degrees in a radian) x (10AH)
 - (Mg, Mc) x T x (10AR)
 - F x Y
 - (Base of Napierian logs) x (10AG) + J x Q
 - cosec[Bd, Km, (2 x Is) x (10AJ)
 - tan[Ud, Km, Zs] x (10AC)
 - cos[(HAR)d, Zm, Xs] x (10AC) - R
 - (K x BJAR) x R
 - (I x RJAR + R x S
 - sin[Xd, Ym, Ys] x (10AC) + Q x D
 - tan[Dg, Sc, Lec] x (10AC)
 - cosec[Vd, Cm] x (10AJ) + DA(U - N - T)
 - YAP + S + sin[T x Ad]
 - A x Z + C x P

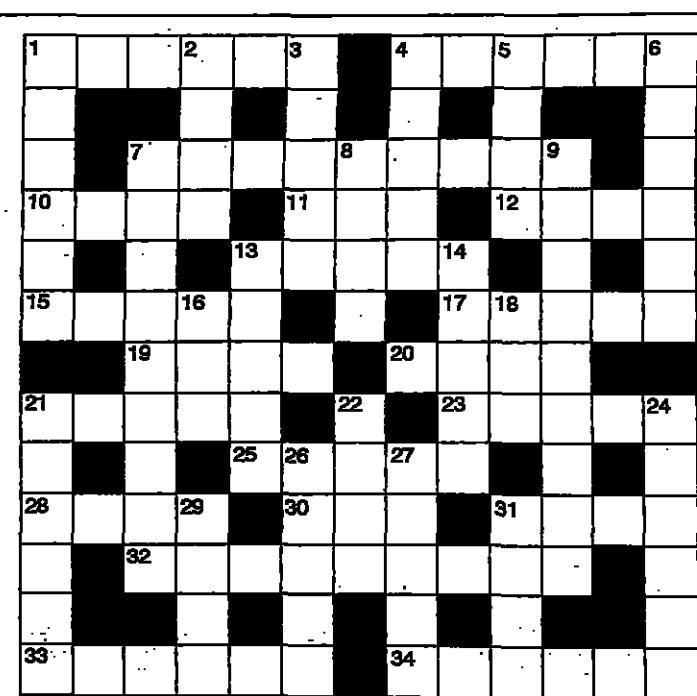
- DOWN
- (Grades between a bearing of south and a bearing of 175g, 53c, 36cc) x (10AJ)
 - (Pi x R/G) x (10AG) - X
 - (QAG) x J - sqrt[K + V] x (10AG)
 - (BAJ) + E/R + (DAK)
 - (UAR) x L
 - G x sec[(D/Z)r] x (10AC)
 - tan[V x Wd] x (10AV) + E
 - D x W x W x R + W
 - R x tan[Nd, Lm, (G x Ns) x (10AF)
 - cot[(W x Hd) x (10AC)
 - (LAR) x (PAR) x R
 - L x K
 - D x Z + E
 - F - E
 - (OAR) x T
 - M/(10AR)
 - V/G - I x 1 - R
 - (WAL) + E
 - cot[Em] - C
 - (BAR) x T + tan[(R x (HAR)d, Hm, (HAR)s]

Solution to no 3391:
Pas Si Ton by Ken

The clue answers undergo PROJECTION (indicated in the shaded squares), ie the last letter of each answer is moved to the beginning of the next. The title, similarly treated, is "Pass It On".

The winner is S. Shabankareh of Leatherhead, Surrey.

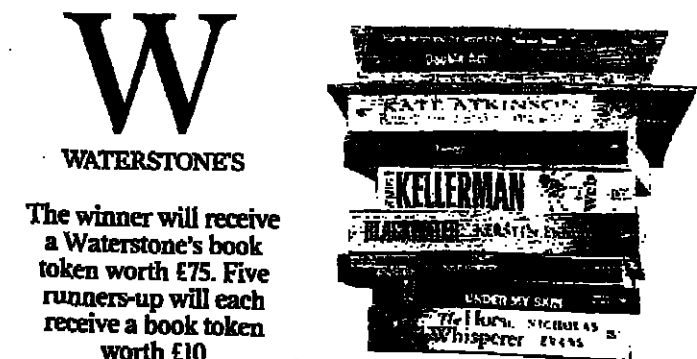
The five runners-up are: J. Dale of Abingdon, Oxfordshire; A. Moore of Sheffield; P. Ferriman of Thetford, Norfolk; J. Parker of Esher, Surrey and G. Rowlands of Ashford, Kent.



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Hong Kong's next chief defends curbs on rights

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY IN HONG KONG

THE truce, barely five weeks old, has ended between the Hong Kong government and Tung Chee-hwa, nominated by Peking to be chief executive after the transfer of sovereignty in July.

Even some of Mr Tung's backers and sections of the press usually sympathetic press to him said yesterday that his proposals to curb the freedom to demonstrate and to belong to international political groups would alarm local people.

Last night Mr Tung disclosed the names of 11 members of his 15-strong inner cabinet or Executive Council for the post-handover period. While generally pro-Peking, they will be approved by many here as being neither tycoons nor political hardliners. Most have served on Peking-oriented committees.

However, there is no bridge-

ing figure like Mr Tung, who until early this year served on the Executive Council of Chris Patten, the Governor. Mr Tung's appointment to the council was seen as building links to Peking. Mr Tung has appointed nobody who will speak for Hong Kong's democrats or independents, the most popular political group.

The gloves came off yesterday after Mr Tung's hard-hitting speech the night before, supporting recommendations by a Peking-appointed Hong Kong legal group. The proposals were denounced by Mr Patten as a blow to the very heart of the Bill of Rights.

Two specific recommendations, which are likely to be ratified soon by the National People's Congress in Peking, would make it illegal for a political grouping here to have links to a similar organisation abroad, and would require

anyone planning a demonstration to obtain police permission. Until 1992, colonial laws had stipulated much the same thing.

The Hong Kong government, Britain, and the United States have attacked the proposals and Mr Patten gave a warning that after July they could be legally challenged.

Mr Tung spoke forcefully in favour of the changes and denied they would threaten human rights in Hong Kong. "The issue is not about freedom of expression and freedom of assembly," he said.

Mr Tung said he was looking for a balance between individual rights and the needs of the community. He said that police approval was necessary for demonstrations in many Western democracies and that forbidding association with foreign political parties would prevent "destabilisation".

Many local newspapers which normally support Mr Tung called for him to think again, and Allen Lee, chairman of the pro-Peking Liberals, an early champion of Mr Tung and a critic of Mr Patten, said that Hong Kong people had accepted the Bill of Rights and would be unhappy if its central guarantees were removed. "There has been no problem in our community since the enactment of these ordinances," Mr Lee said.

Mr Tung's new cabinet contains two members from Mr Patten's Executive Council, Raymond Chien, a banker, and Rosanna Wong, the housing authority chairman. Mr Patten praised these appointments.



Protesters wear dunce caps in Hong Kong yesterday, symbolising victims of Chinese political repression



New image: Oly the kookaburra, Syd the platypus and Millie the echidna have been drawn for the 2000 Games

Olympic honours for outback outsiders

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

AUSTRALIA'S love affair with the kangaroo, the koala and the emu appears to be over. The three quintessentially Australian symbols, which have done so much to sell the country's image to the rest of the world, have effectively been told to hop it.

When Sydney hosts the Olympic Games in 2000, three new mascots will epitomise the land down under.

Yesterday they were revealed as Syd, the duck-billed platypus, Oly the laughing kookaburra and Millie the

echidna. An echidna — spiny ant-eater — is, like the platypus, an egg-laying mammal. But will the joke be on the Olympic organisers who had the audacity to ditch Australia's three most popular icons? Naturally, the man who created the cartoon characters to sell the Australian Olympics to the world says no.

"Internationally the kangaroo and koala are well known and widely used," Matthew Hatton said. "This was our chance to showcase some of our other exotic wonders."

Even Bob Carr, the Premier of New South Wales, who detests anything remotely kitsch, accepted that the characters were "funny, friendly and thoroughly Australian". The new mascots have also received the approval of the International Olympic Committee's executive board.

But the IOC has a questionable track record in these matters. Many felt that the committee should have taken a tougher stance with the Atlanta organisers who introduced Izzy, their mascot, at

the closing ceremony in Barcelona as "Whattiz". Predictably, nobody knew the answer.

At least the names of the three Aussie mascots make sense: Syd for Sydney, Millie for Millennium and Oly for Olympics.

It could have been worse. Among other ideas considered by the Australian Olympic organisers were a koala bear dressed as a pole vaulter, a person wearing an Olympic ring costume, and a pair of smiling running shoes.

Suharto whitewash likely as poll war of paint pots heats up

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN JAKARTA

A BATTLE of the paint pots in central Java, the Indonesian heartland, demonstrates how farcical the nation's sixth general election, due in May, will be. For all the pledges of greater democracy, army-backed one-man rule looks set to continue in the world's fourth biggest country.

Central Java's authorities have been painting telegraph poles, public buildings, fences and even trees canary yellow, the ruling Golkar party's colour. At night, the opposition fights back with white paint, symbolising neutrality.

The raiders risk arrest but insist they will not stop. The pettiness of the paint war shows how limited are the opportunities to express dissent in Indonesia, where radio and television services, and political gatherings, are strictly controlled and elections have one overriding purpose: to perpetuate the reign of President Suharto, 75.

It is all but certain that he will be a presidential candidate in 1998, health permit-

ting. Many of the country's 200 million people believe he rules by divine mandate — he supposedly has *wahyu*, the gift of power — but the urban underclass says that to stay in office he exploits the powers of the state.

Campaigning for National Assembly seats on May 29 is already under way unofficially. The main issue is economic disparity. The rich-poor divide is huge and widening, threatening more social unrest.

Mr Suharto's three decades in office have brought improvements in life expectancy, literacy and living conditions, and he has quelled racial and ethnic conflicts. But tension is close to the surface.

Golkar's 529 election candidates include four of the President's six children, relatives, and the wives of generals and senior government officials. Mr Suharto's friends and relatives dominate big business. Resentment of such nepotism runs deep and raises fears of instability in a post-Suharto era.



Two girls in the Ginza, Tokyo's nightlife centre

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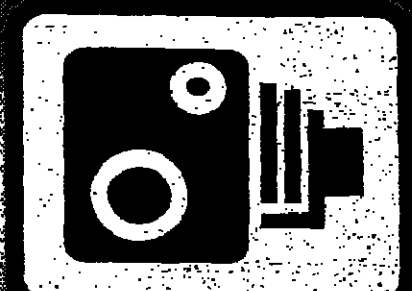
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Old pals aid Clinton on letters 'hotline'

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

AN AVERAGE of 15,000 Americans write to President Clinton every day but only those bearing one of two magic numbers can be certain to reach the Oval Office.

These "Dear Bill" letters are part of a private epistolary brains trust that Mr Clinton has established with his oldest friends and earliest allies.

At a time when Washington is obsessed by questions of access to the President, particularly from Asian donors to the Democratic Party, this small cadre of loyalists provides perhaps the most telling insight into how this President tests the waters in his nation.

They are the chosen few who have been given a secret nine-digit post code and a personal fax number, the only group of American citizens who can honestly say they have a direct line to Mr Clinton and his policy.

Any letter bearing the secret "zip" code is quickly removed from the daily pile in the White House post

room and placed under the President's door. The faxes that spew into the small cubbyhole next to the Oval Office are swiftly rushed to his desk.

When Carolyn Staley, the preacher's daughter raised in the house next to Billy Clinton, wanted to rebuke the President last spring, she sent a fax. Mrs Staley, now deputy director of the National Institute for Literacy, said the Clinton budget would reduce spending on adult literacy to below the levels of the Bush Administration. Within hours she had a call from a budget analyst, and adult education programmes are now scheduled to receive a \$95 million injection in this year's presidential budget.

Earlier this month, when the Supreme Court was hearing arguments in the sexual harassment suit brought against Mr Clinton by Paula Jones, a former Arkansas state employee, Mrs Staley sent condolences to her old friend.

"At some level this is killing him,"

she said. "He wishes he could walk out, just casually up and down the street, and have people come up to him and talk about what they're thinking... We try to keep him on target. We're real people. We're real salt of the earth, blue collar, no silver spoon in the mouth."

Another who stays in contact is David Leopold, a chum from elementary school who is now a travelling computer software salesman. He will send as many as three faxes a week from his laptop on subjects from the North American Free Trade Agreement to what he has heard on radio talk-shows around the country.

Philip Jamison, in his class at Georgetown University and a Vietnam veteran, told the President that normalising relations with that country was a good thing. Maura Aspell, the only other non-Catholic at St John's parish school in Hot Springs, Arkansas, is another correspondent. Tommy Caplan, an author who sometimes works on speeches, is one, too.

"He contacts them afterwards by phone late at night and even his closest advisers don't know who he has talked to. He has to feel he is getting all the information before making a decision," said one White House aide yesterday.

"It's all part of the 21st-century outreach. If Al Gore becomes president he will probably have his own e-mail and personal website."

Poring over these missives, between 100 and 500 a week, is said to be an indispensable part of Mr Clinton's private time, the three to four hours that have been built into his daily schedule by Erskine Bowles, Chief of Staff.



Only a privileged few can be certain that their letters will reach President Clinton in the Oval Office

Canadian trappers cash in on fad for fur

FROM RICHARD CLEROUX IN OTTAWA

A SALE of furs opened in Toronto yesterday and is expected to provoke protests by animal rights activists around the world. More than 100,000 pelts are expected to be sold this weekend after a return to popularity for fur garments.

Alison Beal, of the Fur Institute of Canada, said the demand was being driven by fashion designers and the fashion press in New York.

The sudden resurgence of popularity of furs, which had been in steady decline for the past ten years, is attributed in large part to the prominence given furs in *Vogue* magazine and other fashion publications.

More than 80 per cent of the furs sold in Toronto this weekend will find their way to New York.

Only a year ago fur sales were so depressed that the annual June fur auction in Montreal was discontinued, ending a tradition that went back almost 200 years.

The new-found popularity is a bonanza for Canadian trappers, most of whom are aboriginal people living in remote areas of northern Canada for whom there is little else by way of work.

In poor years, a beaver skin will fetch \$80 (£49) for a trapper, double that for an ordinary fox pelt. But when furs are rare the market can fluctuate and even a modest beaver pelt can fetch \$200.

Republican joins Cabinet

Washington: Former Senator William Cohen of Maine was sworn in as Defence Secretary yesterday to become the first Republican to serve in a Clinton Cabinet. He succeeds William Perry.

President Clinton said the Senate's 99-0 vote to confirm Mr Cohen "sent a strong signal of its intention to work... in a bipartisan spirit to preserve and enhance our national security. Bill Cohen is the embodiment of that spirit." Mr Cohen said he looked forward to serving "to a new century with clarity of purpose". (AP)



Cohen: "a strong signal"

Pope attacks media for 'unwholesome' message

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

THE Pope yesterday accused the world's media of mocking religious believers by portraying them in a bad light and bombarding the young with "unwholesome images", rather than reinforcing moral values in the run-up to the millennium. He also said he sympathised with the "sufferings of divorced people", but said remarriage after divorce constituted "moral disorder".

In a message for World Communications Day, the Pope said the global explosion of information technology had given people "an ever-growing choice of sources... but the greater the choice, the harder it may be to choose responsibly". It was increasingly difficult to "protect one's eyes and ears from images and sounds which arrive through the media unexpectedly and uninvited". The media reached families "including very young children... What way

do the media point to? What truth do they propose? What life do they offer?"

Parents found it especially hard to guard their children from unwholesome messages, the Pope said, and it was "shocking how easily advanced communication technologies can be exploited by those whose intentions are evil". The Vatican has shown growing concern over sex and violence on television, and pornography on the Internet.

The Pope said many people in the Third World aspired to new technology, but were concerned about "domination of the media by so-called Western culture... Media products are seen as in some way representing values that the West holds dear... The truth may well be that the foremost value they really represent is commercial profit."

Programmes which dealt with religious or spiritual

aspirations or were morally uplifting and helped people to lead better lives were decreasing. "It is not easy to remain optimistic about the positive influence of the media when they appear either to ignore the vital role of religion in people's lives or to mock religious belief."

Speaking at the end of a Vatican conference on the family, the Pope said the Church could "not be indifferent to the painful problem" of divorce and remarriage. The task of the Church was to deal with family disintegration through "pastoral care consistent with Christ's teaching".

The Pope's guardian of doctrinal purity, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, yesterday also upheld the ban on the ordination of women. But he surprised observers by decreeing that those who advocated women priests were guilty of "an error" rather than "heresy".

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Death toll rises in Algeria as extremists step up campaign



Zeroual: pledge to fight terrorism

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

THE terror sweeping Algeria claimed more victims yesterday, with the assassination of a local government official in Algiers, the killing of five people in a city suburb and the murder of 15 more just outside the capital.

There were unconfirmed reports that 22 others had their throats cut by Muslim extremists in the provincial town of Benhamdane. Such atrocities have become almost a daily occurrence in latest upsurge of violence.

More than 200 Algerians have been killed in bombings, village massacres and other terrorist attacks since the start

of the holy month of Ramadan on January 10.

In the latest massacre, 15 civilians from a single extended family, including ten women, were killed on a farm in Ali Baba on the outskirts of Algiers. Some were beheaded, others had their throats cut, police said.

The bloodletting reflects an increasingly brutal policy by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the most militant of the fundamentalist groups fighting to topple the military-backed Government.

Breaking a long silence President Zeroual of Algeria, a former general, was due to

address the nation last night and was expected to emphasise his determination to fight terrorism and discuss a forthcoming election.

Just two weeks ago government ministers were claiming that the extremists had been vanquished, but the latest killings stands in stark contradiction to recent government claims that it faced only "residual terrorism". An estimated 60,000 people have died in the carnage since 1992 when the military moved to cancel elections which the fundamentalists were poised to win.

This week the country's principal secular opposition

leader, speaking in Rome, warned that Algeria was spiralling into total chaos and called on the United States to appoint a mediator to try to end the bloodshed. Hocine Ait Ahmed accused France, Algeria's former colonial ruler, of callous indifference to a death toll he put at 100,000, and he urged President Clinton to select a peace negotiator who might "unblock the situation".

The Algerian Government, however, is likely to reject any attempt by the Americans to intervene.

Leading article, page 27
Magazine, page 20

Morocco launches drive to quell Islamic students

BY TUNKU VARADARAJAN

ALARMED by an epidemic of Islamic fundamentalism among university students in Casablanca, and unnerved by the daily violence which scars neighbouring Algeria, the Moroccan Government has launched its most determined crackdown this decade against Muslim extremists.

Up to 100 student militants have been detained in the past few days at

the Muhammad V University in Casablanca, the main breeding ground for Islamic radicals. The university has been in a state of ferment since the New Year, with boycotts of classes and confrontations with police. With about 30,000 students - the majority with few prospects of employment - it is a hotbed of the banned al-Adl wa al-Ihsan (Justice and Spirituality) party.

The Government's crackdown

began on January 10, when police arrested three leaders of the Union Nationale des Etudiants Marocains, charging them with threatening public order, attacking policemen and damaging public property.

On Tuesday, the three were sentenced to prison terms ranging from one to three years by a tribunal in Ain Choc in Casablanca, after a trial which their lawyers described as "totally in breach of basic legal procedures".

There are at least 33 other student activists awaiting trial. The arrests followed several days of student strikes and demonstrations in Casablanca, ostensibly in protest against poor housing and transport. Yet the protests - which coincided with the seventh anniversary of the house arrest of Abdesslam Yassine, Justice and Spirituality leader - were also used to air opposition to the regime of King Hassan.



Monumental effort: restoration of the Sphinx outside Cairo is nearing an end

Greek who found 'Alexander's tomb' barred by Egypt

BY OUR FOREIGN STAFF

A GREEK archaeologist who claimed to have found the tomb of Alexander the Great has had her licence to excavate in Egypt revoked.

Liana Souvaltzi announced in 1995 that she had found the tomb at Siwa oasis in north-western Egypt, but Greek and Egyptian archaeologists dismissed her claims.

All Hassan, the secretary general of the state's Supreme Council for Antiquities, said that not one of 22 specialists had a good word to say about the methods of her mission, which was suspended in October pending an inquiry.

"The system was one of the worst in the field of archaeology. The experts studied it for six hours and at the end none of them said even 'Give her a chance'. They said it has to be stopped," Mr Hassan said.

The report of the inquiry was one of the worst I have ever seen, on the methods, on the recording, on photography, on jumping from one place to another as if hunting," he said.

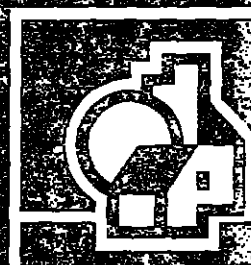
"No wise archaeologist declares the result of his excavations before reaching the end ... This is not archaeology, this is political propaganda. It

has nothing to do with science." Ms Souvaltzi's team had broken up the inscription it presented as evidence that the tomb was Alexander's, moving the pieces around to try to suit their reading of it, he added.

Ms Souvaltzi called the Egyptian charges "wretched lies" adding: "I reject all decisions and conclusions, and my revelations will be made through the courts."

Meanwhile, Mr Hassan has announced that the Sphinx at Giza is on the road to recovery after six years of extensive restorations. "I can say that within a few months the Sphinx ... will not be in intensive care any more," he said.

He also announced plans to open 20 new museums, and said Egypt should not try to force countries such as Britain, Germany and the United States to hand back Egyptian relics. "As long as we do not have the facilities to ensure these pieces can be well displayed ... it would be better to keep these treasures in the museums of the world to ensure they get as much good publicity for Egypt as possible," he said.



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Steffi Graf's father given jail term for tax fraud

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

THE father of Steffi Graf, the world's top rated woman tennis player, was freed pending an appeal after being sentenced yesterday to three years and nine months in jail as part of a German crackdown on celebrity tax evaders.

Peter Graf, who coached and managed his daughter for many years, looked shaken as he was led out of the courtroom in Mannheim, south-west Germany.

Graf had been charged, along with the family financial adviser, of steering some £14 million of Steffi Graf's sponsorship earnings into foreign accounts and thus illegally shielding around £7 million from the German taxman.

Judge Joachim Plass said there was no evidence that Steffi Graf herself was actively involved in tax evasion. One witness had reported a family meeting attended by the tennis player, in which tax shelters had been discussed. But Steffi was questioned by the judge's last year, denied any involvement in the matter and said that all financial

affairs were run by her father. The player was on a flight to Tokyo as news reached her of the verdict. She had been recovering in Melbourne from injury and illness after her shock defeat in the fourth round of the Australian Tennis Open last Sunday.

"One of the most important things for us and the Graf family is that the court wants prosecutors to close the files in the case of Stefanie Graf," said her father's defence lawyer. Friends said the player was relieved that the case was over but was concerned about her father's probable return to jail. The defence team had pleaded for a suspended two-year sentence and a fine, a move that would have effectively freed Graf, who spent 15 months in pre-trial detention. Unless an appeal is upheld Graf will have to return to prison for at least 14 months. Taking into account the pre-trial arrest and a likely remission of sentence, he should be free next year.

The family financial adviser, Joachim Eckardt, was jailed yesterday for two years and six months. He, like Graf, was freed on bail pending appeal.

The trial has left some critical questions unresolved. Graf understood from local politicians that he had a degree of protection. He believed, too, there was an understanding that tax payments would be reduced to a symbolic minimum to encourage Steffi Graf to continue

living in Germany. The 27-year-old player is regarded as Germany's premier sports star not only because she is a consistent winner, but also because of her evident modesty and self-control.

But the public standing of Steffi Graf, and the determination of the authorities to keep her resident in Germany was not pursued with gusto by the investigators. The judge noted that the tax authorities

had been slow and remiss in their dealings with her father, saying that this had been taken into account in giving Graf a much softer sentence than that demanded by the prosecutor.

The trial had a symbolic value for Germans who are trying to calculate how much they will lose or gain from tax reforms and who are complaining about heavy surcharges to help the rebuilding

of Eastern Germany. Tax inspectors enraged Boris Becker recently by searching through his financial papers while he was away over Christmas — prompting a threat to leave the country. Other targets have been television and football stars who five in Belgium to benefit from the lower rate of income tax. □ Vienna: The father of Gerhard Berger, the Formula One racing driver, went on

trial accused of swindling a German bank out of DM15 million (£5.6 million). Johann Berger, 62, denies the charge. Prosecutors told the Innsbruck court that Herr Berger and another man tricked the Landesgrosbank in Stuttgart out of the money on the pretext of setting up a wood plant in southern Germany, state television said.

A verdict is not expected until mid-March. (Reuters)



Peter Graf waits for the verdict in a Mannheim court yesterday. He was convicted of illegally shielding about £7 million from the German taxman

WORLD SUMMARY

Serb deal takes TV off air

Belgrade: Serbian Socialist hardliners and opposition leaders in the city of Kragujevac struck a deal yesterday over control of the local media to avert more violent clashes.

Under the deal, valid until a ruling by a court, Radio Kragujevac will broadcast only entertainment programmes. The television station will stay off air.

But rumours later the main board of President Milosevic's ruling Socialist slammed the Zajedno coalition for "destabilising" the country. (Reuters)

Superbowl stunt woman killed

New York: Laura Patterson, 43, died when she hit the ground as she practised a bungee jump for American football's Superbowl in New Orleans between the Green Bay Packers and the New England Patriots. Her husband and sister were among about 750 people who saw the tragedy. The bungee jumping part of tomorrow's event has been cancelled.

Preview, page 54

Carolina to vote on 'racist' flag

Washington: A debate over keeping the Confederate flag flying in South Carolina is to be settled by a referendum in November, the state's House of Representatives decided (Ian Brodie writes). Alone among the states, South Carolina still flies the flag — a symbol of racial hatred to American blacks — above its State Capitol in Columbia.

Train joy-rider makes tracks

Moscow: Russian police are searching for a railway joy-rider in the far eastern settlement of Tynda who boarded a locomotive on the Baikal-Amur line and set off. The locomotive was found abandoned the same evening a few miles up the track. Police say they have no idea of the joy-rider's identity.

Doting parent awarded ice creams for a good shot across sofa

BY ROGER BOYES

PETER GRAF, father of one of the most successful women tennis players of modern times, was yesterday sitting behind the high walls of the family villa in Bruchl contemplating a broken career.

The guilty verdict on tax evasion charges marks a watershed not only for the 58-year-old former used car salesman — who lived for and through his daughter Steffi — but also for Germany. For Germans, Steffi was the model of a sports heroine and many had hoped that she would also have a model family.

Yet the stressed, complicated relationship of a tennis father with a tennis daughter



Peter Graf embraces his daughter after she retained her Wimbledon title in 1993

often falls far short of the sentimental ideal. Steffi was not unique in this: Mary Pierce (who had a father banned from the courts), Jennifer Capriati and Monica

Selles all had entwined and difficult relationships with their fathers. Tennis fathers start off as coaches — Graf had his daughter knocking balls over a sofa at the age of

three. 50 consecutive good balls earning an ice cream — and frequently end up marketing their offspring. Graf sold, or at least hired out, his daughter's feet, back and

headband to the best-paying sponsors, kept the tournament money flowing in and decided he knew better than the experts how to shelter her cash from the gaze of the German taxman.

The balance of the relationship slowly changed as Steffi grew up. She gained in strength as she collected Grand Slam titles (22 so far), while he grew weaker, dependent on large infusions of cocaine, tranquillisers, flattery — and his daughter. Many on the tennis circuit were surprised when Steffi continued to play well during her father's 15-month pre-trial ordeal. But the fact was that the 27-year-old had long ago learnt to live without the daily supervision of her father.

while Graf needed her presence more than ever. One of Steffi's rare public breakdowns during the investigation was caught by camera in a German television documentary. Steffi was describing how her father watched her perform in the French Open on a prison television set. He was tense and excited and everyone in the cell block was as nervous as Graf. When she won, the whole block started to bang their cell walls in celebration. Narrating this in a cheerful tone — ever the brave, dutiful daughter — she suddenly broke down in tears. Normally Steffi Graf only cries in public out of frustration or physical pain. Graf liked parties, had a well-publicised affair with a

nude model and was happy to be photographed with politicians and jet set figures. The court heard yesterday about the shadowy, private side of Graf's unhappy life: the suicide of his mother when he was a teenager, blackmail attempts against him, a nervous breakdown and alcohol dependency.

His bargaining chip with politicians and the Inland Revenue was always that he could move the Graf family abroad, like racing driver Michael Schumacher — and Germany would lose its heroine and her money. This threat failed to work its magic. Last night some in the Graf circle suggested that the family — when the sentence is served — may indeed leave.

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مكذبا من الأصل

Football-crazy minister tackles stick-in-the-mud bureaucrats of the art world

Master of culture shock

ROME FILE
by RICHARD OWEN



ONE MAN is increasingly appearing on Italian television as the front man of the ruling nine-month centre-left coalition to soothe growing anxieties over Europe and the economy: Walter Veltroni, the boyish, bespectacled Deputy Prime Minister and former Communist.

At 41, the former journalist and film critic is Italy's youngest Cabinet minister. Much given to open-neck button-down shirts, he is a child of 1968 and even wrote a book called *The Dream of the Sixties*. He went to film school in Rome, his home town after making his first film when he was 19, somewhat to his embarrassment, on prime-time TV this week. Author of a best-selling study of Robert Kennedy, he is working on a novel set in the unlikely world of professional swimming (Jilly Cooper, take note) for which he jots down notes during meetings. He is also an ardent football fan and amateur player.

As editor of *L'Unità*, formerly the Communist Party paper and now the organ of its successor, the Party of the

Democratic Left (PDS), he removed the hammer and sickle from the masthead, launched a lively second section — and boosted circulation by offering Italian film classics on video.

Married with two daughters, he has gradually shed his youthful Marxism, although not his idealism, and remains an ardent Catholic close to Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, the left-leaning Archbishop of Milan.

When the former Communists entered Government in May for the first time since the Second World War, Signor Veltroni became deputy to Professor Romano Prodi, the Prime Minister, but insisted on the Culture portfolio to "bring fresh air" into a stagnating cultural est-

ablishment. "Nobody had tried to co-ordinate theatre, the fine arts, archaeology, music and sport before," he said. Although Italy's artistic heritage is a major source of revenue, less than half of 1 per cent of the national budget goes on restoration and maintenance of treasures

such as Pompeii. Visitors often find museums or classical sites open only at limited times, with little information and few modern techniques to bring the past alive. "Many do not even have a decent bookshop," Signor Veltroni says.

Corriere della Sera this week accused him of being interested mainly in "photo opportunities and Big Events", enjoying the company of Italy's glitterati and going off to Paris to promote Franco-Italian film productions while Italy's libraries and monuments fall apart.

Signor Veltroni retorts that in less than a year he has boosted financial support for "heritage sites", partly by encouraging private sponsorship and diverting lottery funds to the arts. He has drafted a law allowing museum entrance tickets to be sold through news kiosks and tobacconists, lowered afternoon cinema prices, and made the Roman forum free on Sundays.

Attendance figures at Italy's top 20 museums, headed by Pompeii and the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, have risen by an average 8 per cent. But he admits that the bureaucracy governing Italy's arts is "very entrenched, very conservative... they are suspicious of innovations that undermine their own powers." Many officials were aghast, he said, when he asked Bill Gates, the computer tycoon, if his Microsoft company would like "to get involved in the Italian arts".



Walter Veltroni at a PDS conference: a partisan of the turbulent Sixties, he has shed his youthful Marxism but remains an ardent left-wing Catholic

Leaders poll low vote for dress sense

SIGNOR VELTRONI'S open-neck shirts did not win many marks this week from Romeo Gigli, the leading fashion designer. Signor Gigli was asked by the newspaper *Corriere della Sera* to rate the dress sense of Italy's leading politicians.

The fashion guru decreed that an open-neck white shirt looks fine with a jacket, but added: "You can only really get away with it if you are very good looking."

There were low marks, too, for Silvio Berlusconi, the leader of the Opposition, media tycoon and former Prime Minister, who prides himself on his appearance.

Signor Berlusconi, the designer said, wears too many tight-fitting, old-fashioned double-breasted suits, and even when he is in casual gear he still looks formal and over-dressed.

As for Umberto Bossi, the fiery and dishevelled leader of the separatist Northern League, Signor Gigli said "the man is a walking disaster — he wears vests and grey flannels on the beach, and his suits are terrible, as are his glasses and his watch. He even wears a key ring on his belt."

The only politician to emerge unscathed from the designer's scrutiny, apart from the elegant Foreign Minister, Lamberto Dini, and the immaculate President, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, was Antonio Bassolino, the dapper Mayor of Naples.

He was praised by Signor Gigli for his beautifully cut grey suits and blue shirts "which match his distinguished silver hair and the blue of the Naples skies".

Queues for loos mar Rome

AS Rome gears up for the millennium, with up to 40 million visitors expected, Francesco Rutelli, the Mayor, is growing worried not only about the lack of hotel rooms and parking space but, even more crucially, about the lack of public toilets. An inquiry has revealed that Rome has only 30 public loos, of which only three have facilities for the disabled.

Most tourists just get used to the local custom of using the toilets in cafés

and bars. But the more elegant upmarket institutions, such as the *Café Greco* and *Babington's Tea Rooms*, both near the Spanish Steps, complain that the queues for their loos are often six deep.

Facilities at Rome's Leonardo da Vinci airport at Fiumicino are equally inadequate, and officials have fearful visions of millions of millennial pilgrims besieging the airport's small number of hard-to-find lavatories.

Moscow wary as Chechen rebel chief fights election



Basayev: Islamic law pledge

FROM RICHARD BEESTON
IN MOSCOW

SHAMIL BASAYEV may have traded in his combat fatigues for a smart business suit, but there is no disguising Russia's most wanted "terrorist" as he makes his final push for victory in Chechnya's first presidential elections.

With only three days left before the breakaway republic goes to the polls, the young, charismatic and lethal candidate has proved that he can run an election campaign as efficiently as a military one.

Because there are no reliable opinion polls, it hard to say which of the two front-runners is ahead. Aslan Maskhadov, the former prime minister and Chechen defence chief, who brokered the peace deal with Russia, is widely regarded to have the largest

support base. However, due to security concerns and a bout of flu, he has halted his campaign and handed the initiative to his brash, bearded 32-year-old former subordinate, who is campaigning energetically and with some success. Experts believe that if Mr Maskhadov fails to win outright in the first round, Mr Basayev could well beat him in the second.

Mr Basayev, who became the darling of his countrymen after he spearheaded Chechen forces during their capture of Grozny, has wasted no time in converting his battlefield success into political assets. There are real fears in Chechnya and Moscow that if the former hijacker, hostage-taker and guerrilla commander becomes president, the war-ravaged nation may again find itself in conflict with Russia.

"The latest reports we have from

Chechnya are very distressing to us," said a senior Kremlin source. "Basayev is making all the running. There is a very real chance he could win. Many people feel he is the only man tough enough to run the country."

This month he branded his opponents "a bunch of crooks" and promised, if elected, to turn the country into an independent Islamic state and enforce strict law and order in a nation notorious for its lawlessness.

His law enforcement message is ironic, given that Mr Basayev is largely responsible for creating Chechnya's poor reputation. After graduating from a land management school in Moscow, he suddenly won international fame in 1991, after he hijacked a Russian airliner to Turkey. In 1993 he resurfaced as the

commander of a Chechen unit fighting alongside Muslim separatists against Georgian forces in the break-away region of Abkhazia.

When Russian forces launched their assault on Chechnya two years ago, Mr Basayev established himself as the most daring and ruthless field commander among the rebels, a point reinforced after 11 members of his family were killed in Russian attacks.

In June 1995 he launched his most infamous operation when he led a hostage-raiding party into the southern Russian town of Budentovsk, and left more than 100 people dead.

Although he rejects the label "terrorist" and insists that he regrets the loss of life and wants to "live peacefully with Russia; his detractors remain unconvinced that he has forsaken the gun.

Glacier threatening ski hamlet in Italy

FROM REUTERS IN MILAN

A MOUNTAIN hamlet threatened by a glacier near the Italian ski resort of Courmayeur has been evacuated.

Ferdinando Derriard, said the Mayor of Courmayeur, said that about 3,500 cubic ft of ice had broken off the nose of the glacier on the Grandes Jorasses peaks in the Mont Blanc massif, northwestern Italy. "There's still the main part which has to break off," he said. "It's there, balancing. We're waiting for it to fall."

Experts say the hump of ice, about 230 ft high and 330 ft across, could detach itself at any moment from the body of

the glacier as it moves forward.

Oscar Talola, head of Courmayeur's avalanche committee, said: "We don't know when it will fall — but it's imminent."

The glacier is 7.5 miles from the pines of Courmayeur, and authorities say the popular ski resort is not threatened. However Planpincieux, a mountain hamlet in Val Ferret, the valley which an avalanche caused by the falling ice is expected to hit, has been evacuated, the road up to it "closed" and a cross-country piste placed out of bounds.

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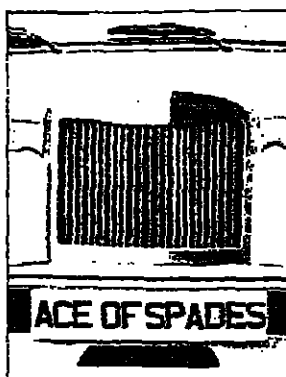
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Page 3

CAR 97

SATURDAY JANUARY 25 1997

Driving's future: the great debate

Motor cars are the blessing that could ultimately become the curse of the 21st century. The machines that once liberated the well-off have become essential for millions. They have also sentenced the present generation to the frustration of never-ending journeys that would astonish the pioneers of Britain's biggest single industry.

Concerns about ill-health caused through pollution, noise, nuisance and destruction caused through

road building and the relentless consumption of natural resources through making and fuelling cars have made transport a major issue for the millennium.

Today, as a General Election looms, CAR 97 launches a great debate over the future of motoring. Squaring the circle between mobility and strangulation has become a conundrum for all the major parties, and a platform for the Green lobbyists who were once regarded as tree-dwelling extremists.

The car has allowed millions to

We love our cars, but traffic levels are becoming insane. This week, the Government's agenda. Next week, Labour's reply

travel unheralded distances for business and holidays cheaply and quickly. But the rapid growth in motoring — from 10 million cars in 1967 to 25 million now — has condemned us all to neurosis over pollution and time wasted in traffic jams. Even the chairman of Vauxhall, one of the country's big three carmakers, is prepared to say

"enough is enough" in one of the opening shots of our debate.

Yesterday a Bill obliging local authorities to set limits on the growth of traffic went before the Commons. Below, Sir George Young, Transport Secretary and "bicycling baronet" sets out why he also remains a "minister for motoring". Next week, Labour's Trans-

port Spokesman, Andrew Smith, will spell out his party's policies.

The transport debate is no longer a contest between speed-freaks and obsessive Greens. It is one that confronts every mother, father, child, teacher, grandparent, employer... and anyone who wants to breathe clean air and travel with a clear conscience.

The columns of CAR 97 are dedicated to the motor car in all its wonderful variety, from the technological wizardry that makes driving so safe and simple for so many, to the glorious achievements of racers and record-breakers who provide so many of our modern heroes. Britain's motor industry today employs a million people and provides export earnings of well over £10 billion a year.

But the industry which has shown such brilliant ingenuity over the century now faces its biggest

challenge: to ensure a future of growth without suffocating in its own fumes. The problem facing Britain is that millions rely on the car because there is no viable alternative. The *Lex Report on Motoring* this week revealed that eight out of ten Britons could not live without their cars. Only 36 per cent said they would use the car less if public transport was better.

After 100 years, what is the future of the car? We have invited the experts, now let us know what the ordinary motorist thinks.

BARRY LEWIS/NETWORK



To many people, I am known as the bicycling baronet. I am very fond of that form of exercise and transport. But too often this sobriquet leads people to assume that I neither use nor favour other methods of transport.

Let me explode this myth right away. In last year's Green Paper on transport, I made it clear that as a country we need to switch the emphasis to improving public transport and to reduce the impact of road freight. This we are steadily doing through the increasing success of rail privatisation and through grants to encourage more goods to go by rail rather than by road.

However, none of this policy, which commands widespread support, should be interpreted as an attack on the car. It is in precisely this area that we distinguish ourselves from the wilder voices of the Labour Party and fringe movements.

Let me explode another myth — the supposed slash in the roads budget. The plans for spending dedicated to the roads programme were actually increased this year to

enable us to sustain a main programme of around £6 billion, which will mean an average of three to four significant new starts a year.

While the national road network is largely complete, there remain some bottlenecks and blackspots which restrict the vital flow of our traffic, adding to congestion and pollution. We also need to make better use of the existing network and to look after it better as an important contributor to the nation's wealth.

As Conservatives, we are always concerned to maintain the right balance between the needs of business and the preservation of the environment. As steady growth in the economy continues, so we need investment in the infrastructure to carry that growth with its extra business activity, coupled with greater demand for goods and services. But we do not seek to cover our country in concrete.

Let me give a couple of examples: first, on planning for major roads. At present, the way trunk roads are planned can make it difficult to take into account regional priorities and local needs, or

Transport Secretary Sir George Young argues cars should not be attacked, but alternatives encouraged

alternatives such as improvements to other forms of transport, or traffic management measures. The Green Paper proposed a system which would make it easier to take these considerations into account. There has been overwhelming support for this.

Secondly, we have to accept that in many cases it is simply not possible to expand the road network, in line with demand: the impact on the environment would be too great. This particularly applies in towns and cities. So we have to decide how to divide available road space between all who would like to use it — cars, pedestrians, cyclists and lorries. Should part of the road be given over, for example, to a bus priority lane, which will speed buses, but may slow cars? Should cycle lanes and longer phasing for pedestrians crossing lights be allowed, which again will benefit cyclists and pedestrians at the expense of motor traffic? Should parking places be re-



Sir George Young: cars can improve the environment

served for lorries and vans to load and unload rather than car parking?

The answer will vary from place to place. That is why the Green Paper has put great weight on the need for local authorities to be responsible for decisions. We need to get away from the idea of a "Big Brother" state that can decide every transport question.

As a Conservative, I am not anti-motorist. The massive increase in car ownership since

the Second World War, powered by the design and engineering triumphs of manufacturers like Jaguar and Ford, has been a consequence of both higher living standards and higher aspirations. I see the car as a vehicle for increasing choice, freedom and opportunity.

Through owning a car, people can travel at a time they want, to a destination of their choice by any route they wish. Wider car ownership has

meant a huge expansion in the availability of employment, particularly for disabled people, who would find it a real struggle to use public transport. Car ownership has also given people in rural areas greater access to shops, while allowing those in towns more options for leisure activities.

Cars are often business tools. Just think how plumbers and carpenters would manage if denied the opportunity to use cars for carrying their equipment. Many mothers with children rely on cars to get home their heavy grocery bags.

Nowadays, many people seek to deride cars as polluting machines, taking up ever more space in our small island and using up valuable natural resources. But with the advent of more sophisticated engines, recyclable materials, and cleaner fuels, I believe cars can play a part in improving our environment for future generations.

After all, by 2005 air pollution levels from road transport are set to fall to less than half

their 1990 levels in towns, as a result of tighter controls on vehicle emissions and tough measures to enforce them. It is difficult to point to many other industries that have done so much to reduce their impact on the environment.

We also need to encourage alternatives to conventional petrol and diesel vehicles with lower emissions. The Chancellor had this aim in mind when he announced in his Budget last November tax incentives for less polluting lorries and diesel fuel. This will encourage lower particulate emissions from diesel vehicles, and also the development of alternative fuels, such as gas power.

So I say to those puritanical doom-mongers who wish to attack the car, think of what you would be denying people. At a stroke, you would take away their freedom to travel under their own steam to any destination for business or pleasure; you would isolate villages from their market towns; and you would deprive millions of the simple pleasure of driving.

I am certainly a bicycling baronet. But I remain a motor-ing minister.

Maker calls for car ban

NICK REILLY, chairman and managing director of Vauxhall, which sold 283,000 cars in Britain last year, says cars should be banned from city centres and public transport improved to ease congestion. *Vaughan Freeman writes.*

He has even instigated a study looking at ways that would enable white-collar staff at Vauxhall's Luton headquarters to work from home one day a month, to cut the number of cars on the town's roads.

He says he would also like to see staff leaving their company car at home while they make the trip to work by bicycle or on foot. While not going as far as offering staff a company bicycle rather than a Vauxhall Vectra, Reilly

Continued on page 5

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THE DAIHATSU HIJET

DAIHATSU

Slapping the names of alcohol sellers on the side of underfunded forces' vehicles is a shortsighted disaster that only encourages criminal drivers

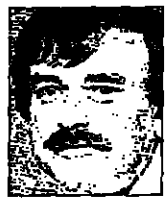
Sponsored police panda to drunks

You may have read this week that chief constables in the 43 police forces in England and Wales are allowed to raise 1 per cent of their budgets from the private sector. This means that we now have sponsored police vehicles. A van belonging to the Avon and Somerset force, for example, carries the name of Thresher, the drinks retailers, and a mobile police station run by the Northumbria force is sponsored by Newcastle Breweries.

The Metropolitan Police Special Constabulary has cars which carry the name of Harrods, and 14 vehicles have been given to the police in Lancashire by companies which include BA, Norweb, Group 4 and the AA.

Humberside police even have a horse called Alchemy donated by

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



Peter Barnard

BP, whose logo appears on the horse's blanket.

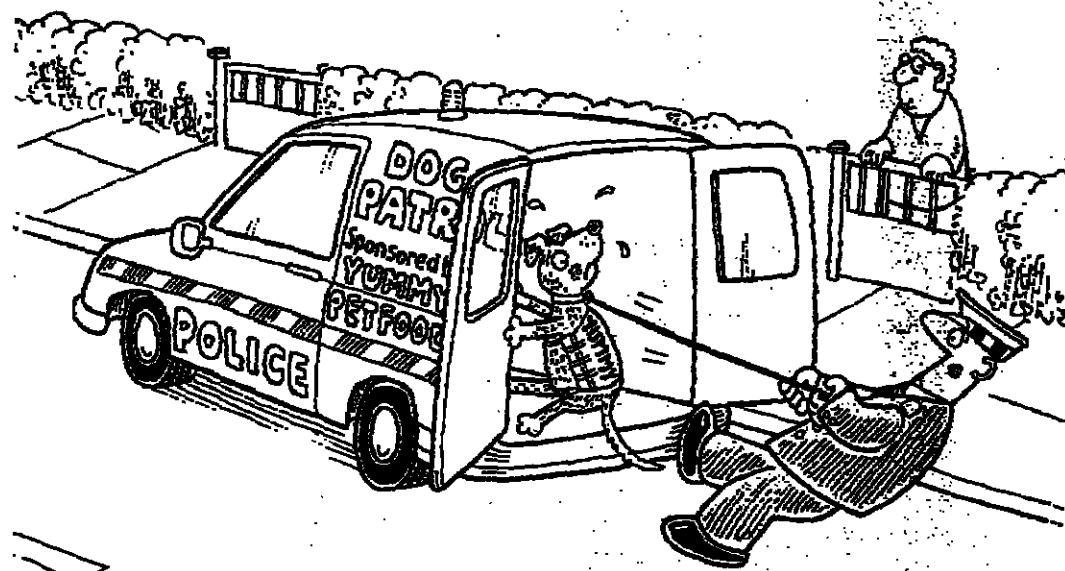
By now some readers may have concluded that this story is one of my occasional wind-ups. But once again, truth out-strings fiction, and I assure you that a drunk taken to a mobile police station in

Gateshead could indeed find himself encouraged to have a few more bottles of Newcastle Brown.

These are rather strange developments, to say the least of it. A perfectly good case can be made for companies helping to fund the police, for they have as much of an interest in fighting crime as the rest of us. But although 1 per cent of budgets does not sound much, that actually amounts to £70 million throughout England and Wales.

Some critics of the scheme fear that he who pays the piper might call the tune, bringing a risk of corporate sponsors having some sway over police activities. I doubt that, but I worry about the nature of some of the sponsorship in relation to road safety.

Thresher and Newcastle Breweries happen to be established



18

companies that do good business meeting a public need. But what they sell is alcohol, the deadliest enemy of road safety. Surely a police force intent on catching drunk drivers is sending a mixed message if it drives around in vehicles paid for by brewers?

There is no shortage of people in this society who will use any excuse to behave badly and a police vehicle advertising alcohol is just the ticket for them. One wonders what our chief constables would regard as unacceptable, if they regard drinks sponsorship as acceptable. How about motorway patrol vehicles emblazoned with adverts for performance cars? This posits the absurd spectacle of a boy

racer in an Astra being pursued up the M1 by a police car encouraging him to buy something even zippier. Of course none of these controversial matters would arise if we had a police force paid for properly out of the public purse. Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, has sanctioned advertising on police vehicles because he sees that as a

way to fill the gap between what the police need and what the Government will give them. That is a short-term gain over a long-term loss. If we are going to cover police vehicles in slogans, let them be messages not adverts. "Keep your distance" and "Take a break" are among those that should be on police cars, and the taxpayer ought to be funding them (though I suppose Kit Kat might be persuaded to sponsor the latter).

The age of the male chauvinist driver may at last be coming to a close. The annual *Lex Report* on motoring, out this week, shows that the proportion of men who think they are better drivers than women has fallen from 35 per cent in 1988 to 24 per cent last year. And, among drivers of both sexes, 31 per cent think women are better than men against only 8 per cent nine years ago.

So at last the driving population is starting to acknowledge what the insurance companies have known for years, though from the insurance standpoint the word "safer" is more appropriate than "better". Or do these words amount to the same thing, when lives are at stake?

New police priorities may mean the end of a crack team, reports Tony Dawe

Top car-crime squad faces axe

A top police squad responsible for recovering millions of pounds worth of stolen cars in the last few years is set to be disbanded despite an unexpected rise in car crime.

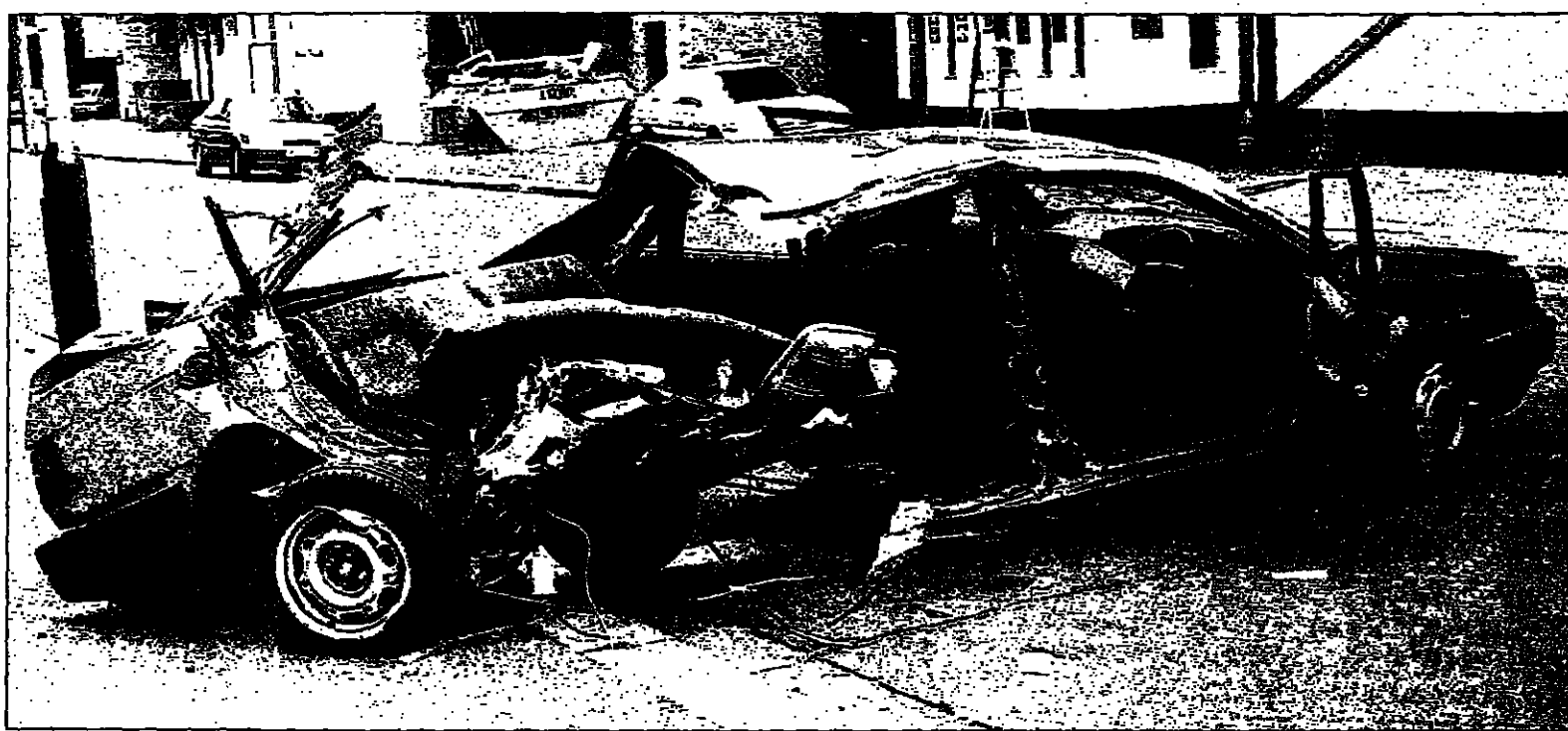
The stolen vehicle squad covering South West London, including such high crime districts as Brixton and Streatham, is likely to be a victim of a plan to transfer officers to other duties in areas of the capital which are supposedly in more need.

The decision will leave the Metropolitan Police area, home to more than two million vehicles, with just 20 specialist officers to handle car crime.

The South West London squad, led by Det Sgt Peter Russell, has pioneered free car clinics for motorists who feared they might unwittingly have bought a stolen car or patched-up wreck. It has played a leading role in combating the increasing number of "ringers" on the roads — stolen cars which have been given a new identity with licence plates, vehicle identification numbers and chassis numbers from scrapped vehicles.

The squad's latest coup has been to track down this month three new BMWs stolen from a dealer in Belgium and given new registration details in Britain. Officers traced one to a motorist who had paid £25,000 in cash for a 525i without realising it was stolen.

One of the squad's most famous cases, featured in *The Times*, involved a Volkswagen Passat which was almost torn in half by an accident yet re-registered six months later. Russell and his team discovered that the man who had bought the wreck had scrapped it then re-registered it, quoting the same licence and chassis number and



The squad has led the fight against the increasing number of "ringers" on the roads — wrecked cars which have been given new identities

planned to report it stolen so that he could make a claim. Two of Russell's six-man squad have already been moved to other duties and the remaining members are awaiting transfer.

One senior Scotland Yard officer critical of the moves told *Car 97*: "Car crime appears no longer to be a central part of the Metropolitan Police Commissioner's policy. It will be increasingly difficult to find an officer trained in car crime and who can spot a ringer. Ultimately it is the public who will lose out."

The Met will be left with one central vehicle squad giving the capital the same number of specialist officers as the Greater Manchester and West Midlands forces, which are responsible for fewer crimes.

Greater Manchester has a high-profile, high-tech squad which has cracked down successfully on "ringing" while the West Midlands motor vehicle squad comprises 15 officers and three vehicle examiners and is backed by divisional auto-crime teams.

London's cutbacks come as the Association of British Insurers reports an increase in claims for car crime after years of improvement. Last year's British Crime Survey reported a slight drop in both the number of stolen vehicles and thefts from vehicles but still discovered that 500,000 had been stolen in 1995 and 2.5 million people had been the victim of a theft.

A Metropolitan Police

spokeswoman insisted yesterday that no final decision had yet been made about the future of the South West area stolen vehicle squad. She said that the resource allocation formula, as it is called, will ensure that the "right number of people with the right skills are located in the right places".

Approximately 100 of the 372 officers from the South West area who will be relocated have moved already. Divisional commanders will have the responsibility of deciding the most appropriate way of reducing their numbers. However their priority will be to preserve front-line policing by constables as emphasised by Sir Paul Condon, the Commissioner, in his strategy for policing London in the 21st century.

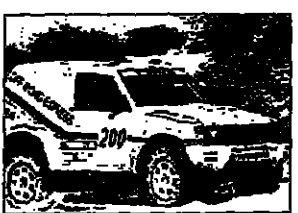


Spotting a sophisticated ringer takes specialist skills

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mitsubishi drubs Dakar

MITSUBISHI took the honours in the Dakar Rally, finishing with six vehicles in the top ten places, wiping out opposition which included Toyota, Nissan and Isuzu. The 15-day, 5,300 mile rally across the toughest terrain in Africa was won by the Shogun four-wheel-drive based vehicles.



Shogun-based winners

A SPECIAL tribute from *Car 97* to Edward Newsom, Britain's oldest driver, who died this week aged 105. It was this publication that told the story of a man who had lived throughout the first century of the motor car and who was still driving around his home in Hove, Sussex, until recently.

DRIVERS without no-claims discounts are being clobbered by insurers, according to a check by the AA. The price war means premiums for motorists with full no-claims will pay only £5 more on average this year, while those with third-party policies will pay an average £4 less. Without no-claims though, motorists face increases of up to 7 per cent, an average £31 a year more for both comprehensive and third-party premiums.

Carrot and stick for novices

Alan Copps on new insurance incentives and licence penalties

Newly qualified drivers are going to be offered the best possible incentive to take a few extra lessons, the chance to win a car.

The prize offer is part of a series of initiatives to cut casualties among young drivers, the most vulnerable group on Britain's roads. It will be a feature of a revised "Pass-plus" scheme which already offers insurance discounts to those who have just passed a test if they sign up for a special series of six extra lessons.

Bernard Herdman, chief executive of the Driving Standards Agency, says the revamped Pass-plus will be a "carrot" for young drivers to go with the "stick" of the Driver Act, the law under which drivers who

accumulate six or more penalty points within two years of passing the test will have to retake both the theory and practical tests. The DSA announced this week that the Driver Act would come into force from June 1.

"At present we get about 1,000 new drivers per month signing on for Pass-plus. That's quite a considerable contribution to safety but a small number when you take into account that 800,000 people a year pass the test," says Herdman.

The extra lessons concentrate on things like motorway

driving and driving at night, situations which most learners never experience until after they have passed the test. The extra lessons cost on average about £80," says Herdman.

At present under Pass-plus, insurance companies offer a percentage discount for one year to drivers who sign up. But under the revamped scheme, the incentives will be much greater. Companies will offer Pass-plus drivers a one-year no-claims bonus, which should represent a saving of £100 or more per year for most young drivers, says Tony Baker, deputy director of the Association of British Insurers who has just become chairman of the Pass-plus board.

"The draw for a car and other prizes like holidays will be an additional encouragement to publicise the scheme much more widely," he says. "In addition, we are trying to negotiate a reduced excess for drivers who take the extra lessons." Another revision will allow young drivers to keep their entitlement to Pass-plus discounts for up to two years after they pass the test, if they cannot afford their own car

"It means if a 17-year-old passes the test in a parent's car, it is still worth signing up for Pass-plus, because if they save up and buy their own car when they are 19, they will get an immediate one year no-claims bonus," says Baker.

Mr Herdman says the Pass-plus incentives are a vital part of the carrot-and-stick approach. "It's a positive aspect to safety and leads to a no-claims discount which could save a driver money year after year," he says.

The Driver Act is the other side of the coin, a deterrent to youngsters who may be tempted to take risks. "In effect if they get six points on their licence they go back to zero," says Herdman. "We think this will bring tremendous peer pressure on young drivers. It's one thing to have penalty points. For them it would be a really big blow to have to go back to L-plates."

Under the Act, introduced as a Private Member's Bill by Dr Michael Clark, Tory MP for Rochford, and given Government support, drivers who are penalised in this way will be able to apply to retake tests immediately, but even if they pass, the points will remain on their licence for the usual period. It will come into force

● LONDON
A3 Kingston; northbound lane closure on the Kingston Bypass. Heavy congestion. M1 junction 2 major roadworks. No access to or from the A1.
A504; roadworks on Hendon Lane.
A50 Hounslow; roadworks with single alternate lane traffic on Staines Road at Wellington Road North.
A201 Southwark; off-peak (8am-6pm) resurfacing.
A408 Upper Edmonton; major roadworks on Angel Road.
A3212 Westminster; overnight at weekends (8pm-6am) Bridge Street and Victoria Embankment closed between Parliament Square and Westminster Bridge.
A232 Wallington; roadworks and width restrictions.

● SOUTH EAST
A300 Apsley; roadworks and temporary lights.
M40 junctions 1a-3; long-term roadworks with a contraflow.
A23 Patcham; lane closures on slip-roads and local restrictions.
M27 junctions 8-10; roadworks with lane closures and a contraflow at times.
A41 Watford; bridge work on North Western Avenue — 30mph limit with contraflow.
A2 Canterbury; roadworks and various lane closures.
M25 junctions 8-10; restrictions and lane closures both ways.

● SOUTH WEST
A30 Victoria; temporary traffic lights.
A35 Christchurch Bypass; lane closure between Fountain Way and Stoney Lane roundabout.
M5 junction 13; only one lane open.
M5 junctions 17-20; contraflow with 50mph limit.
A3003 Andover Bypass; off-peak and overnight lane closures.
M5 junctions 20-19; one lane closed northbound.

● MIDLANDS AND EAST
A11 Alconbury Hills; reduced to one lane northbound.
A58 Derby Southern Bypass; roadworks.
A1 Great Ponton; lane closures.
A484 Houghton; temporary lights around the Houghton Green roundabout.
A500 Stoke area; contraflow between Talke (A34) and Longport.
A14 Kentford between Kentford and Risby; contraflow.
A41 Wolverhampton;

temporary traffic lights on Bliston Road.
M16 junction 2; major roadworks closing the southbound entry slip-road and northbound exit slip-road.

● NORTH
M6 junction 25-27; 50mph limit in both directions.
A62 Chadderton; M66 construction work on Oldham Road at the junction with Hollinwood Ave.
M6 between Lancaster and Skipton; contraflow and 50mph limit.
M53 junction 2; only one lane open each way.
M1 junctions 34-35; down to two lanes in both directions and 50mph limit.
A665 Whitefield; roadworks with Denton Dale Road closed to inbound traffic near junction with Ings Road.
M1 junction 47; roadworks. Delays on M1, M621 and Dewsbury Road.

● WALES
A482 Upper Aberaeron Bridge closed.
Diversions via Panteg Road and the A487, where there are temporary traffic lights.
A470 north of Cefn Coed; temporary lights.
A48 between Langstone and Penhow; temporary traffic lights.
M4 junctions 23a-24; contraflow.
A485 north of Neath; contraflow in place between Aberdulas (A4230) and Neath (A474).

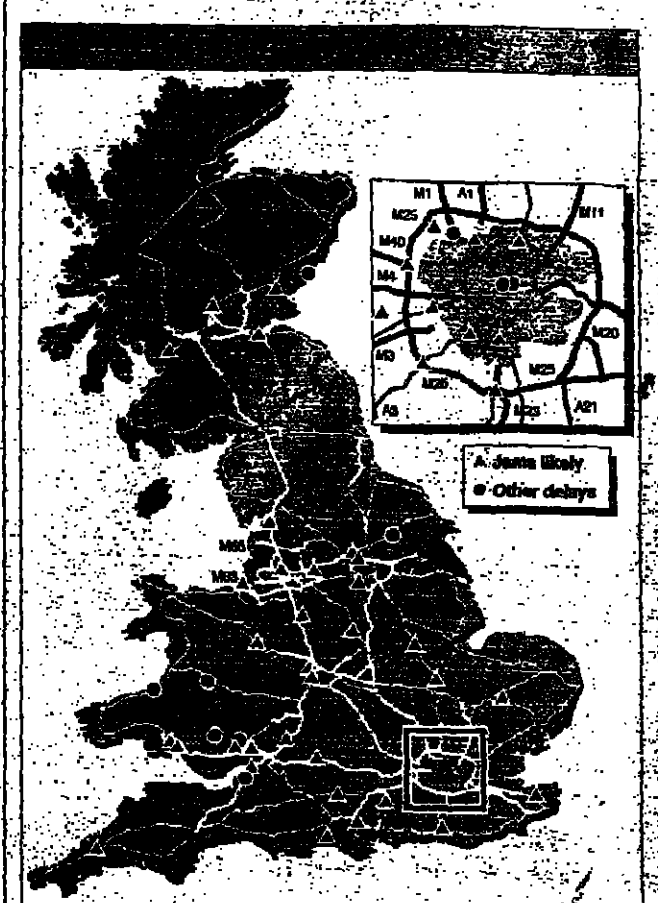
A44 between Llangurig and Elledale Gurng; temporary lights.
M4 junctions 47-48; contraflow reduced to one lane in both directions for roadworks between Swartsea and Llanelli. Long delays expected.
A472 Pontypool; contraflow between Pontypool and the Heron Roundabout. Expect lengthy delays, especially from the A4042 direction.

● SCOTLAND
A937 Montrose; roadworks and restrictions in both directions.
M8 junction 2; lane closures on roundabout.
A8 Princes Street; no motor vehicles. Diversions via South Charlotte Street, Queen Street and York Place.
A92 Tay Road Bridge; maintenance work at the bridge. Also lane closures Southbound.
A90 Greenlaw; contraflow in place, miles East of Dunblane.

A737 between Linlithgow and the Westbound on-ramp at St James is closed.

● IRELAND
A11 Dublin; roadworks and restrictions in both directions.

● OTHER DELAYS
A11 Dublin; roadworks and restrictions in both directions.



AUTOFAX by Les Evans and David Long

Of the 107 Ford GT40s built, only seven were road cars....



The original Porsche family firm was called "The Porsche Company" to make things which move on land, in the air and on the water....



Marshall 170, the Yugoslavian head of state, recently worked as a mechanic in the Austro-Daimler racing team....



Renaud may speak your language but in Japanese the word "spectacles" means....



SATURDAY JANUARY 25 1997

CAR 97

Ford could not sell them in 1969, so it left them in pieces. Vaughan Freeman on three lost classic racers

Brand new aged 30: the late great GT40s

A third of a century after Ford's GT40 scored its fourth Le Mans 24-hour endurance race victory, and three decades since the last one was built, three new authentic GT40s are being born.

Ford had always planned to build 100 of the 200mph cars, but the fierce competition from the likes of Porsche determined the car's fate. At the track, prize money was scarce, and the car fell on production with 97 built.

The GT40 confirmed the American car giant's place at the head of the motorsport world; ahead of such glamorous European names as Ferrari. Yet for all its accolades, the GT40 was built and engineered in Britain, and the project masterminded by John Willment and his JV Automotive Group.

With all the bits and pieces needed to build the final three cars ready and waiting for assembly when the GT40 project was shelved, the bits — including the five litre, 444bhp engines, gearboxes, suspension and chassis components — were consigned to storage.

Willment snapped up the parts for the last three cars together with the moulds for the composite bodywork panels. Since 1969, Willment's GT40 bits have roamed the UK, waiting for their time to come. Their final resting place was almost their last, stashed unceremoniously on a Yorkshire farm in a derelict caravan until its roof caved in.

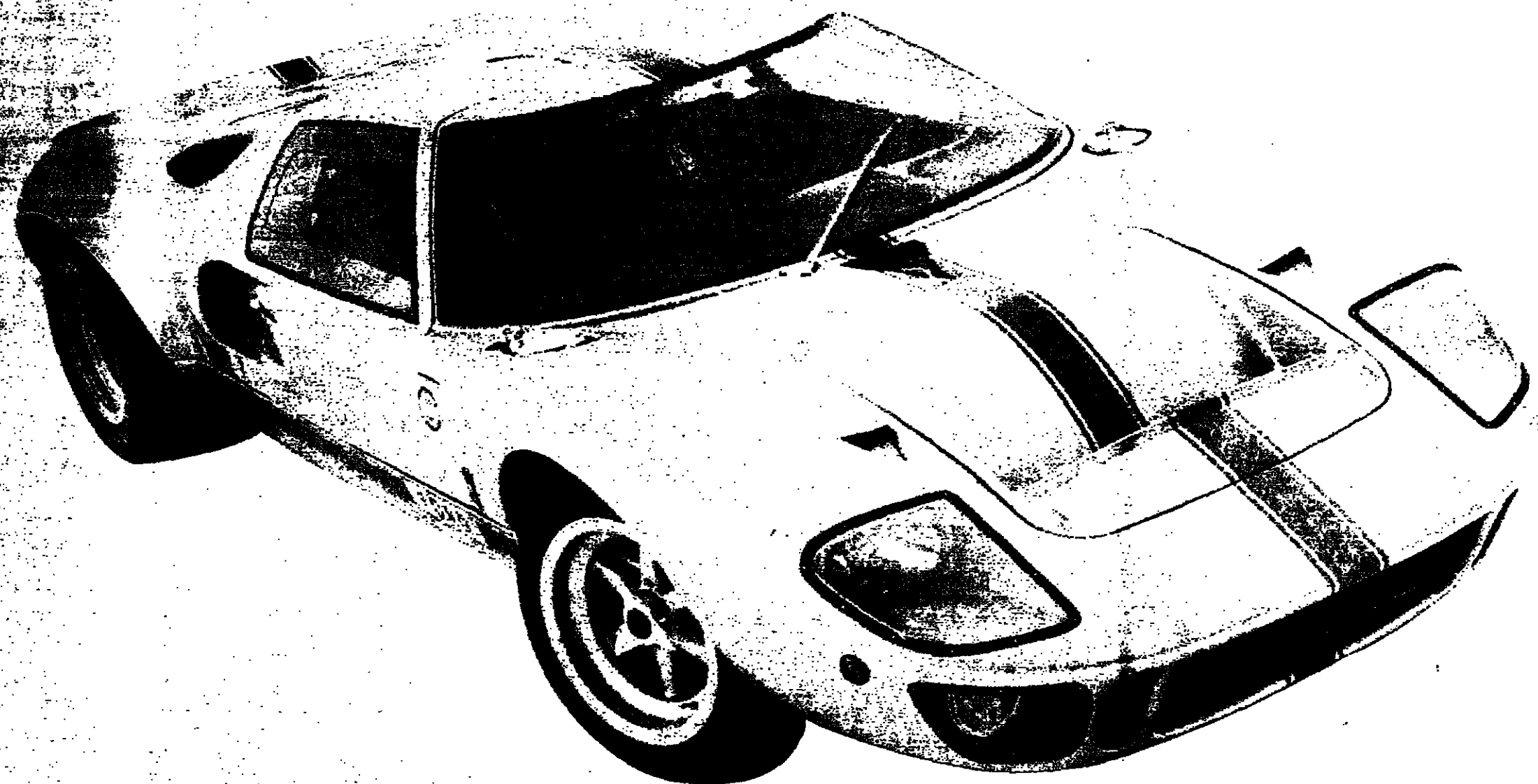
Now Willment has given the go-ahead for the final three cars to be built, and the enterprise is headed by former Ford chassis development supervisor Bryan Wingfield who is carrying out the work at his Chelmsford workshop, overseen by classic car mechanic Paul Fleming. Indeed the GT40 wheel has turned full circle, for the engines are being assembled by John Duttin at Swindon, who did much of the original GT40 engine development work.

One of the cars has already been built and is in America. The second is reserved for Willment's daughter, Janet, and should be completed in January, and the third should be completed by the middle of this year.

Wingfield says the "new" cars are about 90 per cent original. Some items, such as suspension parts which had been affected by corrosion, had to be replaced rather than renovated.

Nearly all the other stored parts could be refurbished to their original condition. The surprisingly small number of parts that could not be renovated were replaced by newly built components using manufacturers' original drawings. The bodies were shaped from fibreglass composites, using the original moulds used for the bodies of the first 97 cars.

So, these are genuine GT40s, not replicas, copies or recreations. They use original



Cast from the past: newly built GT40's body was made in original moulds



Then: Ford takes Le Mans victory number three, left, in 1968, after its famous initial win. Now: one of the few remaining GT40s owned by the carmaker takes to the track on its 30th anniversary, right



components, and carry the last three authentic chassis numbers set aside for the cars.

Wingfield says, "I had been badgering John Willment for years to get the cars built, but he had always had something else on, and then about two years ago he eventually said 'yes', and then started the drudge of refurbishing all the materials."

"I was running a Ford assembly line in Turkey when the GT40 was being developed and had to wait until the motorsport magazines arrived each week to find out the latest."

Once he was back in Britain, Wingfield wasted no time getting involved, even becoming co-founder of the GT40

Owners' Club. Today he is "Mr GT40", and any inquiries about the cars are referred to him by Ford.

The main problem he recalls was keeping the cars on the ground: they were the first to be able to run consistently at 200mph and above. "Basically they were aircraft trying to take off."

"I remember when the first cars went to Le Mans in April 1964 for testing, and two of the cars just took off going down the Mulsanne Straight and went straight into the trees. One was destroyed completely and the other was used for research afterwards."

The significance of the GT40 was the advances it made technologically, and in terms

of its aerodynamics. Before the GT40, cars like Jaguar's D-Type had made do with an upright wing to try to give stability at speed.

Ford's GT40, so named because the top of its roof is a mere 40 inches off the ground, revolutionised race car aerodynamics. The car was shaped so that, like an upside down aircraft wing, it virtually sucked itself on to the tarmac for grip.

Says Wingfield, "The GT40 was also really the first car to have been designed with the help of computers, especially in the use of computer-aided design for the suspension."

For Wingfield, building the final three GT40s finally com-

pletes the limited production run started all those years ago. Can a price be put on the "new" cars? Wingfield says: "You cannot really price these cars. I suppose a GT40 might cost between £350,000 and £450,000, while the two-times Le Mans winner might go for five or six million pounds."

"These cars are not replicas. These three cars were scheduled to be built 30 years ago, and simply never were. We had three complete sets of all the parts necessary. The cars existed, they simply had not been built up. Now they are, using most importantly of all, the original Le Mans engines."

The last three GT40s round off a story started in 1964 when the first ones appeared. De-

spite being quick in the hands of drivers such as Graham Hill and Bruce McLaren, the original cars were not strong enough to last a full Le Mans, and the GT40s entered that year all retired.

In 1966 a GT40 won the Daytona endurance race, but

Le Mans success was still elusive and not one of the six GT40s which entered that year made it to the chequered flag. A year later, all changed, and in a sensational finish GT40s took first, second and third places in a blanket win to crush all opposition.

The pattern was set. The GT40 won Le Mans in 1967 and 1968, and again in 1969 for the most dramatic Le Mans win ever, when after 24 hours racing, the four/Olivier-driven car took the flag by a matter of seconds and 100 yards from a chasing Porsche.

Short life of a super Mini might've been

Kevin Eason on the stunning new successor Rover refuses to build

This stunning little car looks every inch the Mini for the next century — but it is not. Rover this week took the wraps off this concept car which had lain, almost forgotten, in the corner of a design studio belonging to Rover's parent company, BMW, in Munich, Germany.

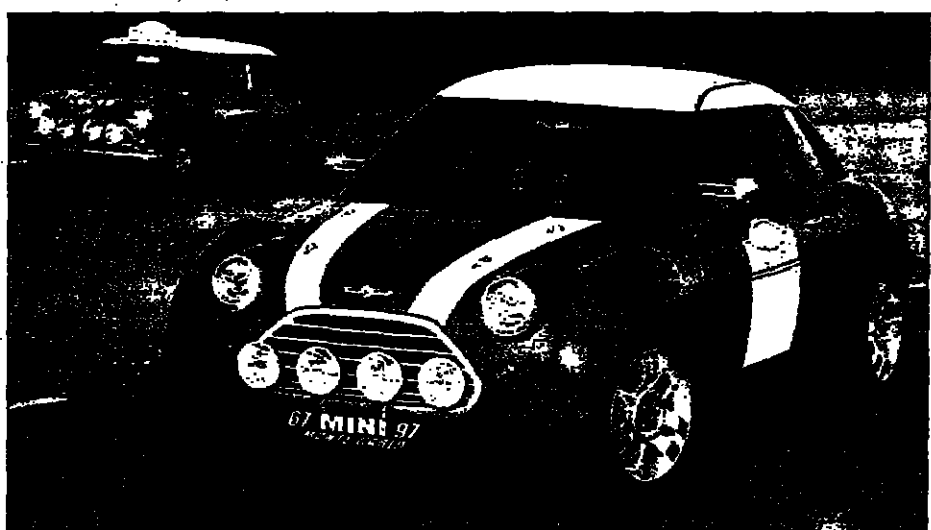
Forgoon, that is, until it was spotted by Tom Purves, former head of BMW in this country and now Rover's director of sales and marketing.

Purves, one of the brightest men in the motor industry, ordered the engineering team to dust down the British-

Purves wants it to be the first stage in raising the profile of the world's favourite "baby" car in the three years up to the launch of the new Mini.

Instead of putting the car on a show stand, which apparently would have raised unwanted expectations among potential buyers, the ACV30 was wheeled out at Monte Carlo for a short demonstration drive, out of sight of British fans, journalists... or, indeed, any interested parties at all. An immense shame, for the ACV30 is ample demonstration that the spirit and excellence of design is alive and well inside Rover.

This car — the ACV in the title stands for advanced concept vehicle — gives few clues to what the Mini for the millennium might look like. The face of the 38-year-old veteran is clearly discernible through the fat wheel arches and cluster of foglamps, but this Mini gets a 115bhp 1.8-litre K-series engine from the MGF



Classic looks shine through, but the ACV30 is a new design from the ground up

placed midships. Underneath, the front and rear subframes also come from the MGF, linked to a spaceframe chassis devised by BMW. The body is hand-beaten aluminium while the rear is a hatch, unlike the current Mini's tiny boot opening.

The interior is basic rally car: just two sculpted racing seats with harnesses, while the cabin is stripped down but features polished aluminium fascia beams and gearstick and a fascinating circular, centrally-mounted instrument cluster, which echoes the centre speedometer of the Mini of old.

That cluster is probably the only design cue in the concept car which could emerge in the

Mini being planned by BMW for production at Rover's giant plant at Longbridge in Birmingham at the turn of the century. The new car will be a conventionally front-engined car, with dimensions closer to the Ford Ka than the current 10-feet long Mini, following the trend towards larger superminis.

Engines will be led by a Chrysler-designed 1.4, made in South America and shared between the American company and Rover, while the car will likely be loaded with gadgets and "big car" features, reflected in a price which will probably start £10,000 more expensive than today's Mini.

which is about £9,000 — one change for the millennium that we could live without.

The ACV30 looks so much fun, it could probably generate its own niche among buyers happy to forego wood paneling for the exciting shape and basic but striking interior. But Rover says firmly that the ACV30 is nothing more than a study with no link to what comes next.

So the stunning little rally car, which arrived suddenly and unannounced, will disappear from view just as suddenly while we wait with bated breath to discover what the Mini for the next century will look like. We can only hope it is has the same potential for fun and good looks.

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Want to be a traffic warden? Eve-Ann Prentice goes to Hendon to discover the tricks of their trade

The meter maid's day is past. Parking's a serious business

The day of the meter maid is past. Parking on a double yellow line because you have vainly looked for a meter, may be a thing of the past. But it is not all sorts, says Baines. "I used to be a print worker, then I went to an advert seeking traffic wardens. I was recruited and I have never looked back. I wish I had done it 20 years ago because now I look forward to coming to work."

There is a misconception that all members of the public hate traffic wardens, says Baines. "But only a small percentage scream and shout, the vast majority understand that we are trying to maintain the free flow of traffic. If a motorist thinks along, stops where he should and thinks 'whoops, here comes a traffic warden', 99 per cent will drive away and that in itself means we are doing a good job."

Ex-servicemen were the first to be recruited as traffic wardens in London in 1961. The first women wardens patrolled the streets of Leicester from March, 1961, and were billed as issuing tickets "in the friendliest manner". But it was not until 1965 that women wardens — immortalised when Paul McCartney sang his love for "Lovely Rita, meter maid" — appeared in London.

The system governing parking tickets is undergoing a radical change with local authorities being given the option to decriminalise parking offences. And this is where the parking attendants come in, hired by councils. So far, many London boroughs and Oxford and Winchester have opted to employ their own attendants, and an unknown number of other authorities are applying to do the same. A

Department of Transport spokesman was coy about revealing the figure: "Until they have done so, we can't say how many."

There are around 1,500 parking attendants in London. Their introduction caused uproar when Westminster became the first London borough to employ them about five years ago — and paid them bonuses if they issued more than a certain number of tickets.

Now all that has changed, according to a spokesman for the Parking Committee for London, which is responsible for the attendants. "They are not paid according to the number of tickets they issue," the spokesman said. "That said, they are regularly appraised and the number of tickets would be taken into account. We also set

training standards for all the parking attendants."

London's 1,400 traffic wardens, on the other hand, undergo a five-week training course, and one practical and two written exams to cope with ever more complex road regulations and the city's network of Red Routes.

The traffic wardens' classroom at Hendon is reached via a staircase where guns are displayed in a wall-case, presumably on a floor where less prosaic police skills are taught. A desk laden with pamphlets in the wardens' classroom gives a hint of the workings of the modern traffic warden's mind: there are manuals on law, lost and found property, bus stops, bomb awareness and interpersonal skills.

Joanne Silthorpe, who also teaches wardens, says: "Huge changes have taken place in the

past two years with the red lines, and new endorsable offences which can involve a warden asking someone to surrender their driving licence. The days of the meter maid are over."

According to Baines, there is a "stringent selection process" for anyone wanting to join the London wardens' beat. "People who answer the advertisements are invited for a one-day selection for training," he says. "They are tested on written and numerical skills, have a medical and a security check."

Those who join the five-week course spend the first fortnight learning the theory, and the final three weeks out on attachment to a working traffic warden unit. About 15 per cent of those who embark on the course drop out, many of these because they are not keen on the uniform, according to Baines. Once

qualified, annual pay rates for a 42-hour working week start at £9,200, although wardens are lobbying for a pay rise.

Can traffic wardens show mercy if they believe an offence is being committed? "We do have discretion," says Baines, "but only until we start writing. Once the number is on a ticket, it becomes a court document and we are obliged to issue the ticket."

Not that getting ticketed should be any excuse for tantrums. At the Parking Committee for London — the last resort for the capital's aggrieved motorists — calm and good humour abound.

Twenty thousand people went there to appeal against parking tickets in 1995 and about half won their cases. Motorists in the rest of the country may soon have their own parking committees.

The Parking Committee is undoubtedly among the most user-friendly tribunals in the country. Appellants are given appointments. They sit not in a dock but across a desk from the adjudicator, they are not humiliated by arcane courtroom practice.

Hearings are held on selected days from 8am to 8pm to suit most shift patterns, costs are not normally awarded and nearly everyone presents their own case.



Traffic wardens are part of the police force, have a wonderful relationship with most of the public and their main aim in life is to make life easier for all of us. At least that is what they tell you at Hendon police training college

We have to move from the idea of one person per vehicle

continued from page 1

is clearly committed to the idea of reducing road use and cutting traffic congestion.

Certainly, he says, something needs to be done to restrict car use, if not ownership. Britain's current car population of more than 24 million is forecast to rise by as much as 50 per cent over the next 15 to 20 years, at a time when the country's roads are under increasing pressure.

Listening to the views from such a person, the phrase "sustainable transport" springs unbidden to mind. Yet Reilly does not see his view of a more environmentally friendly approach to mass transport as a "disguised economic suicide note."

He believes in the need for the travelling public to switch from the private car to improved, flexible public transport, while simultaneously changing the coned and kerbed highway for a home-working information superhighway. But he does not believe such a revolution will happen overnight.

Reilly says: "This is a bit of a hobby horse of mine. We have got to reduce people's need to drive, and we must do more to encourage them out of the private car and into other forms of transport."

We need more park-and-ride schemes, other ways of getting into London inside the

M25. The level of congestion on our roads at the moment is ludicrous, and I think we will have to look at banning the car from some town centres.

Minibuses running often can be almost as flexible as a car and such modes of transport need to be encouraged, perhaps coupled with extremely heavy tolls for driving into towns and maybe a ban on cars from cities."

He says Britain's dependence on roads for moving freight is one example of how road traffic can be lightened: "We fully support the role of the rail network, and want to see more freight carried on the railway system rather than by road. In my view the amount of freight carried on the railway here is far lower than it should be, and certainly far lower than it is in other European countries."

For example, Vauxhall has something like 35 lorries a day travelling between its Ellesmereport plant and one of our major ports. Germany, journeys that can easily be done by rail, says Reilly, simply cannot compete on price.

"So we are fully committed to other forms of transport, but I do not think we will lose a single car sale as a result. People will always want a car for their freedom and for their own personal use." He believes people will still buy cars, more cars owned per household than now, but that house-

holds will own different cars for different purposes, and that not all of them will be out on the roads at the same time.

Car buyers, he says, should not have to use their cars for the boring drudge of traffic-congested commuting, but for pleasure and weekends away on roads freed of traffic by a combined shift of freight to rail, and improved public transport.

The philosophy fits in with the marketing strategy of Vauxhall and most of its major competitors, who increasingly offer cars as "lifestyle accessories" or "niche models" suitable for specific leisure activities but not necessarily ideal for everyday use.

He is under no illusions, however, of how difficult it will be to convince car users to take the bus, tram or train. "When we changed the shift patterns at one of our UK plants, one of the main objections came from workers who complained that it would disrupt their car-sharing arrangements."

"So, we introduced a free bus scheme to pick up staff at designated collection points. After about three months we had to cancel the service because there were only two or three people on each bus. Everybody else he said was driving into work, alone, in their own cars."

Despite that disappointment, Reilly hopes the Vauxhall staff who can work



"Is your journey really necessary, Sir?" Reilly urges punitive tolls for town drivers



City wardens aren't enough. Total bans may be needed

from home will take up an experiment designed to reduce the amount of time they spend simply travelling to and from their offices.

"We are not talking here about people working permanently from home. There are difficulties in such a scheme, in arranging meetings, for example, so as to ensure there will be enough people physically in the office when a meeting is called."

For certain staff also we would need to equip them with computer equipment, fax equipment and modems, which is not possible for everyone. Even so, he believes it will be possible for up to 1,000 white-collar staff to spend one day a month working from home.

Longer term, and with a view to an increase in the use of the sort of park-and-ride schemes that Reilly looks on

favourably, Vauxhall plans to concentrate on small vans and 12 and 15-seat mini-buses. Reilly says: "Vans are coming back quite strongly. With congestion in cities increasing, we believe we have to move away from the idea of one person per vehicle, and towards 'people movers' or vans."

Such vehicles could, he believes, play a vital role in flexible, adaptable urban transport systems.

ROADTEST

version. Both cars accelerate with zeal, engines thrumming busily at constant revs while the road speed "catches up". You soon adjust to the curiously monotonous drone. Although Rover claims better performance, the Civic feels the livelier car, especially with the selector in S (for sport) to lower the gearing and raise the revs. The Rover has no such setting.

It's the easy access provided by CVT to peak performance that makes these cars so quick off the mark and eager to overtake. Back off and the transmission selects overdrive, keeping fuss, noise and fuel consumption in check. Both cars make excellent motorway cruisers.

THE TROUBLE with most previous CVTs is that they jerked and surged when moving off and stopping. These new-generation models are much smoother. The Rover snaps into gear a bit abruptly and pulls hard against the brakes when idling. A minor snag with the Honda is that its touch-sensitive throttle demands delicacy when parking. On the move, though, progress is impressively refined in both cars.

On CVT alone, there's not

Forget DAEs Boyer and Honda's CVTs are equal on the basis of their transmission

CIVIC 1.6iES
Engine: four
cylinder, 16-valve,
1,590cc producing
115bhp.

Transmission: Front wheel drive through continuously variable automatic transmission system.

Performance: 0 to 60mph in 10.4 seconds, top speed 106mph

Economy: 42.8mpg, EC combined cycle.

Price: £14,645.

ROVER CVT

Engine: four cylinder, 16-valve, 159 producing 109bhp.

Transmission: Front-wheel drive through continuously variable automatic transmission

Performance: 0 to 60mph in 9.8 seconds
top speed 115mph.
Economy: 36.2mpg.

Price: 216SLi: £15,731 (£14,031 for three-door 216Si).

FORECOURT

included Jaguar's hugely successful C and D-types. The Series I cars, with closed-in headlamps, are considered the best buy, especially with the 4.2-litre engine and the all-synchronised gearbox, brakes that work and decent seats. Expect to pay around £12,000

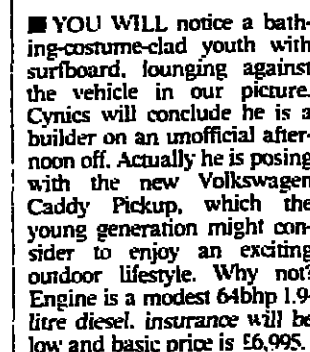
Also worth a look are the six-cylinder Series II cars, which are priced from around £10,000. But E-types are expensive to restore and run, and they can rust dramatically. Watch for bodged or skimpy restorations, and for American left-hand drive cars with less powerful engines, whining gearboxes, tired sus-

■ **VWS GOLF** epitomises sensible motoring. The 1981-1993 Mk11 Golf oozes solidity and its reputation for mechanical integrity ensures healthy resale values. The car is, sadly, also popular with vandals so insurance can be

Best buys are early, clean cars, and the GTi. Beware cars specially prepared for auction and any sign of repaired accident damage. Check any GTi has not been stolen, has finance owing on it or is an insurance write-off.

SPARE PARTS

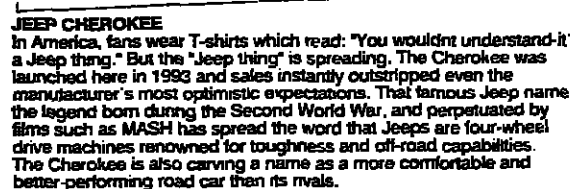
■ **SALES OF** personalised registration numbers topped 100,000 for the first time last year — an annual increase of 72 per cent and worth £37 million. There are still plenty of numbers left to choose from: the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency says that it has five million potential combinations, with 90 per cent priced at below £250. Call the telesales hotline for information, on 0181-200-6565.



Surf's up: VW's Pickup

■ PRICES of Vauxhall cars have gone up by an average 1.1 per cent, although some models — such as the Tigra, Vectra and 2-litre GLS and SRI version of the same — and Omega CD and CDX V6 models — remain the same. That means the Astra 1.6LS 16v five-door goes up by £125 to £12,995, the Corsa 1.2LS by £220 to £8,870 and the Vectra 1.8iLS by £340 to £14,960. Subaru, Ssangyong and Isuzu models also go up in price or remain the same. The reason for the increase is the road tax from February 1 because of import costs and budgetary changes to vehicle excise duty.

USED CAR BRIEF




GOOD NEWS
Loaded with image, equipment and comfort. Standard features including central locking, power steering, power windows, tinted glass and heated mirrors, as well as a good stereo, alloy wheels and highly rated Wrangler All-Terrain tyres for maximum power in the mud.

BAD NEWS Fear luggage space behind back seats is limited and a roof line that is relatively low for an off-roader can cramp headroom for taller drivers. The four-litre, six-cylinder engine might give excellent performance but, matched to an automatic gearbox as standard, is thirsty for fuel.

LOOK FOR 2.5-litre turbo-diesel engine version, quicker than the 2.5-litre petrol version and makes good off-road sense thanks to extra puffing power at low revs. For style, the jet black 4-litre Stealth special edition is hard to beat. Limited edition cars offer air conditioning, cruise control and leather seats.

AVOID
Cars with tatty or damaged load areas, paint along the flank damaged by bushes or thorns and damaged alloy wheels, which are expensive to replace. Cherokee comes with a three-year/60,000-mile warranty, so look for younger cars still covered by the manufacturer with dealer service history.

SAFETY
Like most off-roaders the Cherokee is massively strong. High driver's position gives excellent view of the road and potential hazards and all-wheel drive makes the car exceptionally safe in motoring conditions when braking and cornering on ice, rain or snow can be treacherous in a two-wheel-drive car.

 **cover from AA Insurance (0600 444777) on a 1993 4.0 Limited Cherokee costs a 55-year old professional male, living in Winchester with two children, no claims, £260 fully comprehensive; a similar female pays £282. A 22-year old male, with year's no claims in south London pays £2,261; a similar female £2,182.**

REPLACEMENT PARTS
(Prices include VAT): Clutch assembly £139; full exhaust £285; catalytic converter £465; front brakepads (pair) £50; headlamp £40.

f Expect to pay £11,250 for a 1993 K-reg 2.5 Sport estate, £14,000 for a 1993 4.0 Limited auto, £15,000 for a 1995 M-reg 2.0 TD Sport, £15,750 for a 1994 L-reg 4.0 Limited, £20,250 for a Grand Cherokee 1994 L-reg 5.2-litre V8 and £19,750 for a 1996 N-reg 4.0 Limited.

OVERALL The Jeep Cherokee poses a challenge, not only to the off-roaders from Land Rover but also to the excellent four-wheel-drive cars from Mitsubishi. As good as the Cherokee is off-road, the car, with its classically American light power steering and near-saloon car performance, is easy to live with on tarmac as it is in the mud.

[illegible]

Lea-Francis, a British luxury carmaking legend, is set for a massive comeback, says Vaughan Freeman

Master of ceremonies returns

Lea-Francis, one of the most famous marques in British motoring, is to live again more than 40 years after the cars disappeared from the showrooms.

In the finest traditions of prestige motoring which the Lea-Francis name evokes, the new car will make not the slightest concession to modern automotive trends. Instead, the man behind the marque's rebirth, Hugh Price, is planning a seven-seat, five-and-a-half-litre V12 limousine priced at up to £180,000, complete with division between the chauffeur and the rear passengers, seated three abreast on a bench seat plus two fold-down jump seats.

Bulletproof glass and armour-plating will be among the optional extras which, less alarmingly, will also include a cocktail cabinet.

The car will also continue the traditional method of bespoke hand-crafted building, with the aluminium bodywork made to order around a separate chassis. Fittings will be of stainless steel, with contrasting wood veneers and fabrics such as leather upholstery and wool headcloth. The various versions to be offered will include Landauette and Sedan de Ville. For those who want to design their own car, Lea-Francis will supply a separate chassis upon which customers can fit bodywork.

Standard equipment will include power steering, anti-lock brakes, self-levelling suspension and dual-control air conditioning so that those in the front and rear compartments can each set their own levels of comfort.

The Lea Francis firm began life in the last century building "high class" bicycles, and the marque celebrated its centenary in 1995. The transition from leg-powered two-wheelers to engine-powered four-wheelers came in 1903 when the first Lea-Francis motor car took to the nation's then empty roads — a year before Rover and Rolls-Royce staged their automotive debuts.

The company established itself as a maker of medium-sized sports tourers with the emphasis on prestige, but was soon also building larger four-door saloons. A major technological advance came in 1927 with the launch of the Lea-Francis Hyper, the first super-charged car produced for the British market, which enjoyed much success on the racetrack.

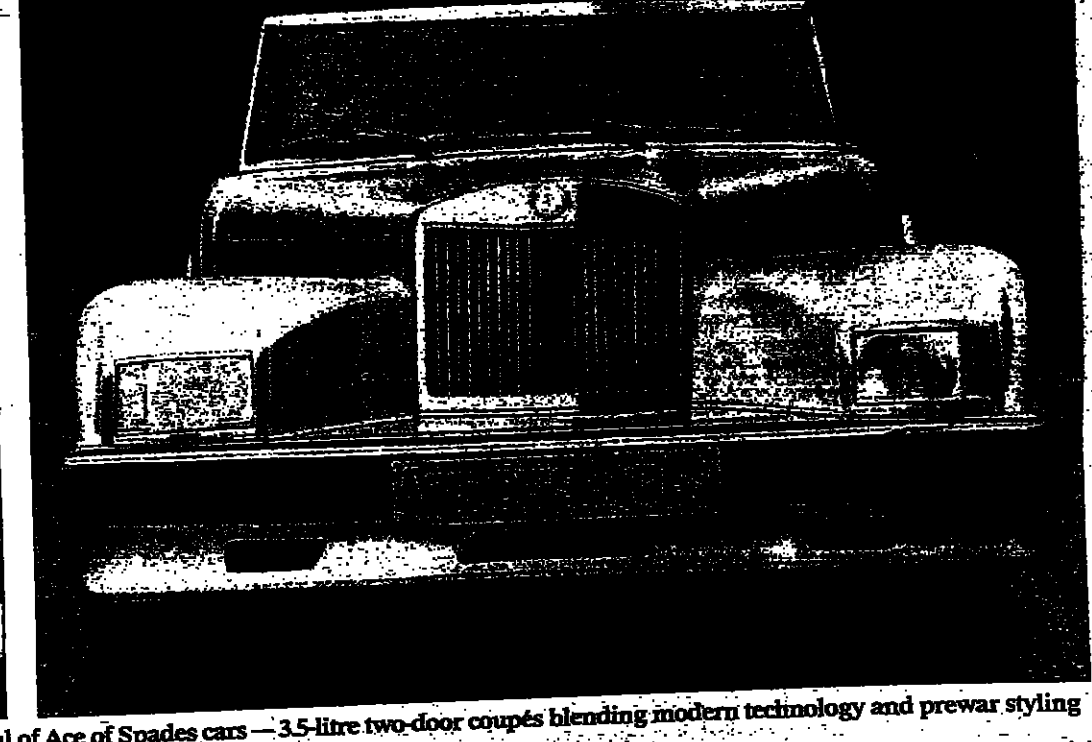
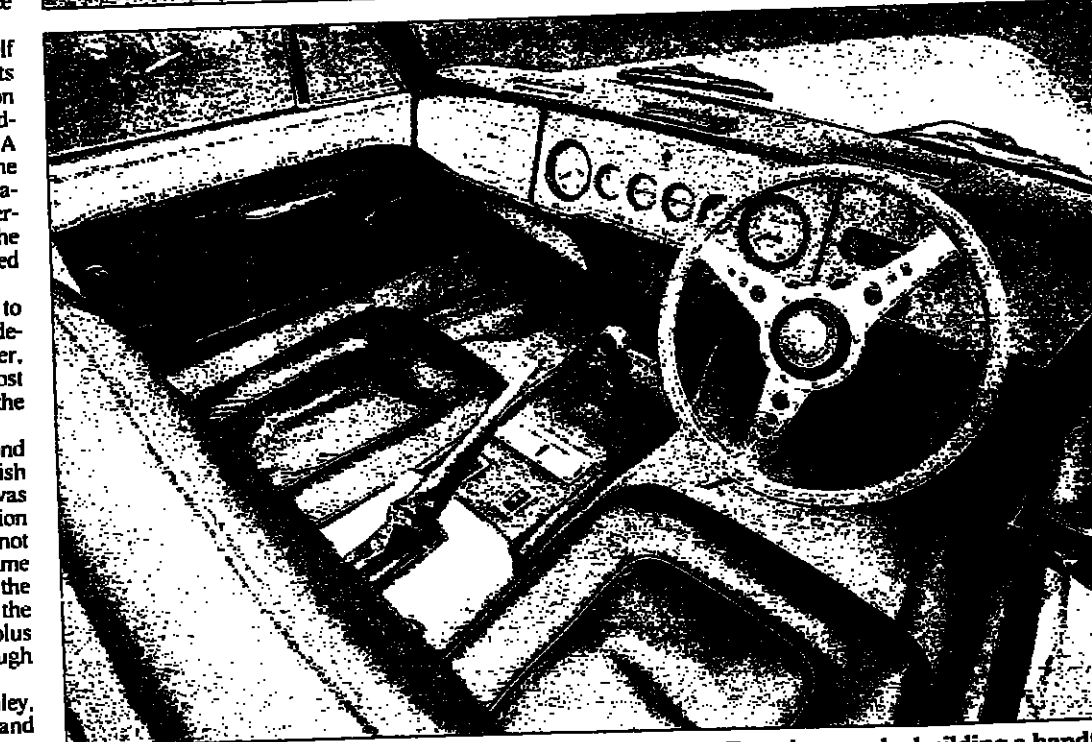
The company's dedication to innovation continued, and a decade after the arrival of the Hyper, Lea-Francis introduced the most efficient engine of any car in the British market.

The years following the Second World War, however, hit British car builders hard. Lea-Francis was no exception. Serious production of cars ceased in 1953. That was not the death of the Lea-Francis name however: almost a decade after the vehicles ceased to be built, the firm's stock and spare parts, plus the name, were bought by Hugh Price.

The Price company of Studley, which specialises in servicing and refurbishing luxury cars, has been able to supply as-new parts dating all the way back to the 1920s, for their cherished vehicles.

Price's commitment to the Lea-Francis is such that he built a handful of Lea-Francis Ace of Spades cars, a 3.5-litre two-door coupé which blended modern automobile technology with grand tourer styling reminiscent of pre-war cars.

Now things have gone a step



Hugh Price has shown his commitment to reviving the Lea-Francis name by building a handful of Ace of Spades cars — 3.5-litre two-door coupés blending modern technology and prewar styling

further, and the Warwickshire-based Lea-Francis Cars firm has joined forces with the highly regarded Park Sheet Metal Company, known for its skill in bespoke car-body building, to make the Lea-Francis live again with the planned limousine.

However commendable the dream though, are the commercial hopes for such a car in today's

motoring world not a little on the thin side? Mr Price's son Barrie thinks not: "We believe that, from our collective experience of the limousine market, and discussions with a sample of potential clients, we can set a target net price of £100,000 to £180,000, intended to generate initial sales of between 15 and 20 cars a year."

Hugh Price says: "The use of separate chassis allows for maximum flexibility of coachwork design, and orders for open or semi-open styles can be accommodated without major structural change."

Hugh Price believes that the demise of classic, prestigious and downright large limousines like the Daimler and the Rolls-Royce Phantom VI has left an opportunity in a select niche market: "This is

a car that we will engineer to meet the customer's individual requirements," he says. "We are convinced that there is a market for these cars. At Lea-Francis Cars we already have a lot of experience in the repair and restoration of Rolls-Royce cars for example, including work on the Phantom VI belonging to the Corporation of London."

"Our feedback is that there is a demand for such cars for ceremonial uses, especially one that offers the sort of headroom that modern limousines cannot. Also, in an age where people are happy to hire a Ferrari for £400 a day, I am convinced that people, perhaps taking a party to Henley or Ascot, would like the chance to hire a car like the Lea-Francis limousine."

Record-breaking Italian horseracer Frankie Dettori reveals to Andrew Pierce how he has promised himself a Ferrari if he ever wins the Ascot Derby

Jockey who dreams of a prancing horse (preferably in red)

Frankie Dettori was champion jockey in 1994, and has now clocked-up more than 1,200 winners. Last September he reduced the bookies to tears. Seven rides for Dettori and seven winners.

The last race finished with the diminutive jockey beaming and hurrying around the Ascot winners' enclosure spraying out champagne, more like the winner of a Formula One grand prix than a victor at the "sport of kings".

The last race was over but no one had gone home. All 20,000 racegoers had stayed to watch history being made. Even the reading of the football results on the BBC only got as far as the Scottish First Division before it was interrupted for live coverage of the sixth race.

STEERING COLUMN

Cars have had a definitive impact on his life. In May 1993 he had been partying at a nightclub in the West End of London when he was pulled over by the police. The police discovered a small amount of cocaine in the well of the door of his silver Mercedes.

He escaped with a caution but the affair cost him dear. He lost a £200,000 racing contract in Hong Kong where jockeys are treated like royalty. From that moment on he worked hard to perfect the talent that he had inherited from his father, who was a champion jockey in Italy.

Dettori has never been conventional. He has been suspended twice for over-

exuberant use of the whip. And he breached royal protocol when he held the Queen's hand throughout a presentation for the winner of the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe.

"What a nice person the Queen is. She did not pull away," he said.

How did you first learn to drive?

On my Vespa. I moved here from Italy as a teenager but like all Italians I love the scooter. The Vespa is a fashion symbol there. I turned up for my first day's work with Luca Cuman in Newmarket on a battered scooter. I was mucking out and cleaning the feed room.

My real name is Lanfranco. The stable lads christened me Frankie. The name has stuck.



Dettori with one of his two Alfa Romeos. He will only drive Italian-built cars

But after a few years mucking out I left behind the beloved Vespa and graduated to a fully fledged driver's licence.

What was your first car?

A Toyota. Happily the details are lost in the mists of time. It

lasted only four months. Hardly a long-stayer.

What car do you drive now and why?

I have two cars. An Alfa Romeo GTV which is for general day-to-day driving. I

also have an Alfa Romeo 164, which is a real workhorse which I use with Catherine, my fiancée.

Do you like driving?

Yes, of course, I do. I am Italian.

What is your most hated car?

Anything which is not Italian, stupid!

What is your dream car?

Having preserved Top of the Pops and modelled for a high-street store, my biggest dream now is to win the Derby at Ascot.

It would be a dream come true to win it. If I did I would buy my dream car: a Ferrari.

What is your worst habit in the car?

I am always fiddling around with the buttons on the dashboard control panel. My other bad habit is constantly falling asleep. But that is only when I have a driver.

What infuriates you most about other drivers?

I not only like to set a cracking pace on the turf. So naturally, I am infuriated when they drive too slow in the fast lane.

What is the most unusual thing you have done in your car?

I crashed at 10mph. Needless

to say I was looking at a shop window at the time. I remember the shop well. It was a Gucci store. My favourite.

Have you ever had points on your licence?

I will be honest. I lost my licence for 28 days for speeding on the motorway. I was clocked at 104mph.

What do you listen to in the car?

Radio One. Cassette tapes and compact discs. Simply Red and Mick Hucknall are my favourite.

If you were Secretary of State for Transport, what is the first thing you would do?

Widen the motorways. Then I would not be so infuriated with slow drivers dawdling in the fast lane.

What is your favourite car advertisement?

I love the Renault Clio advertisement. But it is definitely because of the car and not because of Nicole... or her papa, either.

CAR...TOONS

IT'S THE LAST
TIME I DO A
CAR AD. ☆



WHEN SHE SAID
SHE'D KNITTED
ME A CAR COAT,"



ABOUT THIS
AUTOMATIC
WINDSCREEN

Haldane

The hot hatch
returns with an
extra surprise
for boy racers:
it's a Citroën,
says **Alan Copps**

Think of a fast supermini and the names which spring to mind are Ford Fiesta, Volkswagen Polo or Peugeot 106. Somehow the name of Peugeot's sister company Citroën doesn't figure on the hot-hatch agenda, until now.

The hottest mini on the road is now a Citroën. The VTS version of the SX, introduced last year as Successor to the long-serving AX, gets from 0 to 60mph in just 7.2 seconds, that's a second faster than the 106GTi and faster than any Jaguar saloon except the supercharged version. Top speed is a claimed 177mph.

And the next-fastest mini on the market? Well that's probably the slightly slower Saxo VTR which takes 9.3 seconds to reach 60 mph, still faster than either the 16-valve Polo or Fiesta Si.

These new Citroëns are the answer to the prayers of those who lament the demise of the hot hatch, the souped-up minis beloved of boy racers of the 1980s, who bought them or, too often sadly dispensed with the formality of handing over money, thus contributing to their near extinction by punitive insurance rates a few years ago.

Thanks largely to improved security and safety equipment the hot hatch is beginning to make a comeback. But the Citroën Saxo is an unlikely contender to find at the top of the class. In its more basic form, the Saxo is a pleasant little car perfect for town, its light and precise power-assisted steering provides maximum assistance at low speeds and makes parking especially easy. Its ride lives up to Citroën's reputation for ironing out the bumps.

It doesn't offer the looks or interior refinement of rivals like the Fiesta or Polo, but nor is it as quirky as Citroëns once were. If

that makes it less-appealing to the die-hard enthusiast who thinks all Citroëns should be like the big ones and float along on hydropneumatic cushions, it also makes it more effective and surprising as a small wolf in sheep's clothing.

From the outside, both the VTS and the VTR are lower and squatter than the regular Saxo. Flared wheel arches and alloy wheels are enough to indicate their sporty nature to those in the know, although there is nothing flashy about the exterior and the badging is positively discreet. A wider track offers greater stability and gives the handling user predictability even at high speed without making the ride too harsh. It is a several degree firmer than the standard car, but in a model that can be driven with a great deal more enthusiasm the extra feedback from the road is needed.



VTS exterior is restrained: though the flared arches and alloy wheels hint at sportiness, the badging is positively discreet

CITROEN SAXO VTS

Engine: four-cylinder, 16-valve, 1.6-litre producing 120bhp at 6,600rpm.
Transmission: Five-speed manual.
Performance: Max speed 127mph; 0-60mph in 7.2 seconds.
Economy: Urban 24.8mpg; extra-urban 44.8mpg; combined cycle 34.9mpg.
Equipment: twin airbags, anti-lock brakes, power steering, slide-and-tilt sunroof, electric windows, remote central locking, keypad immobiliser.
Price: £12,620 on the road.

A few wet laps of Brands Hatch (where better to test a hot hatch?) were enough to establish the VTS's credentials as a spirited performer. The 16-valve 1.6-litre engine revs freely beyond the 7,000rpm mark yet pulls smoothly from a little over 1,000rpm. It was possible to complete a lap of this tightly twisting and surprisingly hilly circuit in the rain without changing from fourth gear, but a great

deal more fun to make full use of the smooth five-speed change and keep up the revs.

Even in my relatively inexperienced hands, the car stuck to its line at speed, despite some provocative braking on the blind brow of Paddock bend. In the hands of an instructor from the circuit's race driving school we were getting round the long Clearways curve at 95mph.

On the road both these hot hatches are just as well mannered as lower-powered versions until driven hard when the engine responds rapidly to the demands of cornering and overtaking.

The new additions give the Saxo one of the widest ranges in the supermini market. With nearly 10,000 sold since its introduction last year, the variations now include everything from automatics and frugal diesels to these speedy little cars likely to appeal to much younger drivers.

But the rejuvenated hot hatch has grown up. These cars boast a level of equipment, safety and security that is well in excess of the spartan GTIs of a previous generation.

DR DASHBOARD

Why weren't police cameras a flash idea?

Q Hal I knew those speed cameras were a ploy to wheedle money out of poor motorists. Now we discover the police can't afford to run them. Good — serves 'em right.

A Actually the cameras have done their job. Accidents have been reduced by up to a third on some roads, saving the accident and emergency services millions of pounds. So they were not so bogus, after all.

Q Fair enough. But why can't the police afford to run them when they have been nabbing drivers for £40 fines each time? That must be worth a fortune.

A Around £30 million a year — but the police don't get the cash. That goes direct to the Treasury, so it's a nice little earner for the Government, not the boys in blue, who only administer the 27,000 machines.

Q Will the Government lose money if the police switch off the cameras or raise the limits at which they record speeders?

A It might happen, because the police cannot afford to process the paperwork. The cameras were so successful that prosecutions jumped from 156,000 in 1995 to more than 255,000 last year. Thank God the film didn't go to Boots for processing or you might never have your holiday snaps back.

Q Does that mean we are still not slowing down, even when we know that these cameras are balefully staring at us?

A Apparently not. Drivers have a strange attitude to speeding, as this week's *Half Report on Motoring* showed. More than half the people questioned believe there should be more cameras, with four in ten wanting police to charge on-the-spot fines. Contrast that hard line with findings that a third of drivers don't bother to slow down even when they see a speed camera. Presumably, they beam a wide smile for the flashlight as they hurtle past. Another third slow down in range — and then bang the throttle down again.

Q See what you mean. And this bad behaviour and double-standard motor-ing will get worse, do you think?

A Bad enough already. Lex showed nothing happened to 66 per cent of motorists who were caught on camera and another 13 per cent in the survey received notification but were not followed up. Maybe the tight-fisted Treasury should hand over some of their ill-gotten gains from motorists back to the police to keep the cameras flashing.

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